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BHAVAN S JOURNaL

To

Kulapati Dr. K M Munshi

who did

more than anyone else to

The Indian Spirit

BOOKS BY SATCHIDANANDA MURTY

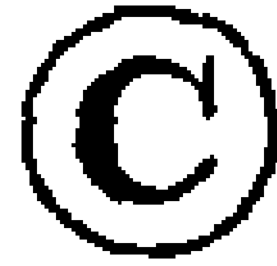
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K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTY

The INDIAN Spirit



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Preface

B. J. Editorial Dept.

Dharmarthakamah samameva sevyah
Sa uttamo yo niratah trivarge vibhajya kalam parisevamanah
—Mahabharata†

THIS BOOK contains studies of some aspects of the Indian mind, as expressed in Indian views of the world and history, attitudes towards work, wealth and prosperity, and philosophy, religion, science, social organization, ethics and politics Being an attempt to understand the Indian achievements and aspirations as recorded in the works of our most reflective and creative thinkers, it is a humanistic approach to Indian culture Every culture is an attempt (conscious as well as unconscious) to conjointly realize in social life certain fundamental values, and at its highest point of development it attains to some extent a specific type of excellence, and upholds a more or less definite ideal of life At the same time in every culture there is a complexity admitting variations of detail, as well as a multanimity of thought and behaviour No society so far has developed a culture which is perfect nor has any society been able to stabilize itself for ever at a particular high cultural level without exploring beyond its conventional frontiers of thought and action Adventure and decadent stagnation are the alternatives which confront every culture If in novel circumstances a civilization cannot burst through its current conceptions and reorganize its social life, it is doomed to decay Also, no culture is wholly unique, for the values sought to be realized by different cultures are not always mutually antagonistic, as human nature and destiny are the same This enables cultural interchange and collaboration

†Santiparva (Madras 1935 6) p 842

This book assumes that it is a philosophical task to understand a culture, and scrutinize, justify and criticize the ideas, attitudes and cosmologies implicit or explicit in it It attempts to do this not only by positively indicating certain Indian notions as to the nature of things and events, but also by removing *asambhavanas* (impossible ideas) and *viparitabhavanas* (wrong ideas) regarding the Indian mentality, found mostly in some Western writings Some examples of such ideas are Indians have no conception of history, no awareness of personal God, and no sense of human dignity They are other-worldly, fatalistic, passive, and uninterested in the pleasures of the senses, material well-being and progress

The present book relies heavily on the Sanskritic sources produced in ancient India, and concentrates on the dominant component of Indian culture This is in a way justified because the majority of Indians during the medieval as well as the modern periods* have taken ancient Indian civilization at its best as their standard, and many of our present ideas are largely the outcome of ancient Indian thought Ancient India is as much the mother of medieval and modern India as Greece is of Europe The continuing foundation of Indian modernity is a mentality that was to a large extent formed in the classical period of India Nevertheless the importance and value of the other components of Indian culture cannot be over-emphasized (they are in fact stressed at many places in this book) and it would be foolish and provincial to identify the totality of Indian culture with its Hindu component only

In my understanding of the Indian mind, I have been most influenced by the study of the *Mahabharata* "which", as that great scholar R C Zaehner said[1], "sums up within its vast bulk every shade and nuance of classical Hinduism both its orthodox

*The medieval began at the end of the twelfth century and the modern with the nineteenth Ghori's victory in 1192 and the commencement of Wellesley's rule in 1798 might be taken as the landmarks inaugurating them In South India the medieval period began almost a century later But not all historians will accept this division into periods

1 *Hinduism*, (HUL) Oxford University Press 1962 p 10

formulations and the outraged protests that these evoked", and next the *Puranas*, especially the *Bhagavata*, which embody some historical traditions as well as what Schelling called "the primordial history of mankind", as the Hindus conceived it They seek to reveal the origin and goal of history and its inner life and drama The writings of Heinrich Zimmer and B K. Sarkar turned my attention to the positive elements in *artha-* and *niti-sastras*, and of Kunhan Raja and Ganganatha Jha to those in the Vedic *Samhitas* and *Mimamsa* It is also fortunate that while my field of specialization in Indian Philosophy is *Advaita*, at a particular period of my life I studied with Madhva teachers Ramanuja and Bala Gangadhara Tilak enabled me to grasp, I believe, the purport of that profound and luminous book—the *Gita* The writings of Rhys Davids, E J Thomas and Rahul Sankrityayan made me see Buddhism in its proper perspective, while those of Nehru, K P Jayaswal, Sri Aurobindo and Max Weber provided me with the right approach and conceptual apparatus for comprehending Indian history and the texts on Hindu politics and sociology Western classical accounts and the books of Alberuni and Bernier supplemented my knowledge from the above sources But I must make it clear that I am not a follower of any one of these scholars, and I do not accept *all* the views and conclusions of any one of them

The substance of Chapter V was delivered as a lecture at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1956 and in its present form was published in *Diogenes* (pp 17-31) No 24 1958, University of Chicago Press[2] It has appeared in translations in four non-Indian and two Indian languages Chapter I was published in *Comprendre* (pp 92-108)[3] No 20, 1959, Venice Chapter VII was prepared for the 1959 Meeting of the

2 From No 32 onwards *Diogenes* is being published by Mario Casalini Ltd, 1519 Pine Avenue West Montreal Canada

3 This Volume containing articles by Toynbee Panikkar Mulk Raj Anand Vreede Campagnolo etc is valuable for understanding India's dialogue with the West, and is available from La Societé Europeene De Culture, Piazza S Marco 52, Venice Italy

Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion In Their Relation To The Democratic Way Of Life, Inc, New York, and was distributed among its fellows and participants in mimeographed form, and Chapter VIII was prepared for the 1960 Meeting of this Conference and was published by it in *The Ethic Of Power The Interplay Of Religion, Philosophy, and Politics*[4] (pp 85–111), 1962, edited by Profs Harold D Lasswell and Harlan Cleveland Chapter II was published under the title "The Indian Character" in *Yojana* (pp 20 5), Nov 24, 1963, published for The Planning Commission by The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India Chapter IV was published in the Commemoration Volume[5] (pp 121–136) presented to Prof K G Saiyidain in 1964, edited by Dr S Abid Husain and Mr A Rashid The material in Chapters I, V, VII and VIII was utilized by me for delivering lectures in the Universities of Tehran and Ankara in October-November 1963 Chapters I and II are now reprinted with many additional Notes, and the latter with an annexe and Chapter VIII has been slightly revised and provided with three footnotes The new Notes contain much that could not originally find a place in the papers The third and the sixth chapters and the annexe to the latter now appear for the first time Though these papers were written for different publications at different times and places, as they represent the consecutive effort of one trend of thought on an integrated group of themes in spite of some repetitions and minor discrepancies they have a unity of outlook and purpose As in similar works, an apparently vulnerable stand has been taken on some controversial matters, and a few generalizations have been made without qualifications

I am grateful to the following for their kind permission to reproduce the above papers Monsieur Roger Caillois Redacteur en chef *Diogene*, Conseil International de la Philosophie et des

4 Distributed by Harper & Brothers New York

5 Published in New Delhi by the Sponsoring Committee (Chairman Dr Zakir Husain Vice President of India)

Sciences Humaines, Paris, Signor Umberto Campagnolo, Directeur, *Comprendre*, The Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, especially its Vice-President Miss Jessica Feingold, Shri H Y Sharada Prasad, Chief Editor, *Yojana*, and Dr S Abid Husain

The typescript was prepared with diacritical marks and it was hoped that it would be printed as it was, but it had to be printed without them This and the occasional laxity in transliteration must for the present subsist along with the other lacunae in this book

I am grateful to the University Grants Commission of India for sponsoring this book and to Andhra University for publishing it

My thanks are due to Prof B Muthuswami, Special Officer, Andhra University Press, for expediting the printing of this work, to Shri D N Parthasarathi Rao, Lecturer in Philosophy, Andhra University, for reading the proofs, and to him and Shri V Gopalakrishnaiah, Lecturer in Philosophy, Andhra University, for making the first two Indexes

K Satchidananda Murty

Andhra University
January 14 1965

श्रद्धाञ्जलिरेष

मम पितृपादेभ्यः

श्री कोत्त वीरभद्रय्यमहोदयेभ्यः

येषां कृपयाऽवाप्यात्

मम आम्नायविहारः सम्पन्नः

Contents

THE INDIAN SPIRIT

CHAPTER ONE



The Indian Spirit: Past and Present

Being one and becoming one learn from the two eyes
For though they are separate from each other they do not see differently

MANOHAR

PROLEGOMENA

Contemporary Free India seems to present to many Western people a phenomenon difficult to comprehend They have been taught to believe that the Indian genius is predominantly mystical, that traditions in India endure for centuries without change, that thinking is the monopoly of small *elites* in that country, that Indians have no sense of social crisis (of injustice, oppression and poverty) and that Indian history is one long story of warring kingdoms and periodic chaos This has been the stereo type built up by the early orientalists and Christian missionaries who came into contact with India and which has, but for a few exceptions been confirmed by succeeding generations of European scholars civilians and missionaries Indian scholars themselves in their works often gave their readers the impression that India cared only for things spiritual, that renunciation, detachment, and *moksa* (liberation from transmigration) were

the themes which formed the core of the Indian Way of Life The sub conscious inferiority complex of the older generation of Indian scholars made them assert the superiority of Indian culture over the Western at least in that respect for in social and political organization military power and industrialization based on technology they could not but accept Western superiority in the nineteenth century Lack of an authentic comprehensive history of India neglect of the *sastras* that dealt with politics and economics astronomy and mathematics chemistry and medicine sexology and pleasure and the almost exclusive emphasis which both European and Indian scholars placed on *sastras* concerned *only* with *nirvana* and *moksa* were responsible for this If Kautilya Brahma Gupta and Varahamihira Caraka and Vatsyayana had received as much attention as the writers of the Upanisads the Buddha and Sankara from competent European and Indian scholars the picture of India in both modern Western and Eastern minds would have been different Just as it is impossible to have a true and comprehensive understanding of Europe if we rely only on the knowledge of the Eleusinian and the Dionysiac mysteries Pythagoras Neo Platonism Diogenes the Stoic the New Testament and the Early Church Fathers Thomas a Kempis St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Avila it is unfair to think that the *moksa sastras* reflect the Indian Spirit in its entirety The spirit of a people —especially of a great people who inhabit almost a continent and who have a continuous known history from at least 5000 B C right up to the present and who form an ethnic mosaic that gave rise to a complex cultural pattern—cannot be exhaustively understood by just relying on a dozen of their books mostly produced before the sixth century B C dealing only with Brahman and Dharma which even in their heyday could have interested only a minority of the teeming population The misunderstanding becomes greater when these books are not studied objectively and critically but mainly relying on the commentaries of a group of thinkers in the middle ages who advocated the illusoriness of

the world and the superiority of actionlessness *(naiskarmya)* over action Equal attention to the books dealing with other matters mentioned above, to literature, art and history, including the history of Indians beyond their borders (to wit in Indonesia and Cambodia), will give a truer understanding of the classic Indian spirit, which only will help us to grasp with sympathy and comprehension contemporary Indian thought and action

From the point of view of an encounter between India and the West, or between the former and the Far East (China and Japan) or the Middle East, it is more important to notice what India's attitude had been and is to the world to man's *vita activa* and to the human problems in general, because in the present age it is in relation to these matters that countries and cultures understand each other and coexist, or misunderstand each other and fight It is not denied that metaphysical assumptions and religious convictions do influence and colour peoples' attitudes to these matters but if we remember that peoples no longer go to war with each other because the same conception of God and Salvation is not held by others and that identical presuppositions and beliefs can result and have resulted in differing ways of action, we will see how the secular attitudes become more relevant for mutual understanding The democratic West is at logger-heads with the Communistic East not because the East is atheistic or denies the existence of the soul and after life, but because the Communistic attitudes to property, free enterprise personal freedom and government and the actions based on these are so very much opposed to what the West considers to be the right attitudes and actions Similarly it is what India is trying to do in secular matters that should interest the Westerners more, specially because India has no church and there is no united religious platform either for or against any live issue The only possible exception to this is the quite considerable group of Catholic Christians in India To a large extent India exemplifies Whitehead s definition of religion as what man does with himself in solitude It will not be incorrect to say that

religion in India occupies the same position as it does in the U S A. No one religion is supported by the Indian State, and the Indian constitution does not grant privileges to any one religion It just happens that the majority of Indian citizens are Hindus, just as the majority of the U S citizens are Protestant Christians, and the evident or subtle discrimination which may be found in India against Muslims and Christians is the result of the personal prejudices of the men who happen to be in authority at the moment either in the government departments or private concerns, but this, just like the discrimination in the U S against the Jews, the Catholics, or the U S citizens of East European or Greek descent, is neither supported by the Constitution, nor is it universal For the same reasons, it is extremely unlikely for a Muslim or a Christian to become the Prime Minister or President of India even as it is for a Jew or a Catholic to become the President of the U S A , or the Prime Minister of U K * But this cannot be an argument for maintaining that there is any greater concern for one's religion in these countries than in the others, or that there is any religious intolerance in the strict sense of the term Also, in the U. S S R , it is difficult to imagine an Outer Mongolian or an Uzbek Muslim ever finding a place in the line of successors to Khrushchev even in the far-distant future

INDIA NOT SPECIALLY SPIRITUAL

I am often amused when Indians and non-Indians talk about the spirituality of India as against the materialism of other countries Countries which produced men like St Francis of Assisi, St John of the Cross, Eckhart, Boehme, Pascal, John Bunyan, and hundreds of others and the homelands of Taoism and Zen Buddhism cannot be condemned as less spiritual than India, and if only we read the history of Byzantine Christianity

* This was written in 1959 Since then Kennedy became President of the U S A , and Zakir Hussain, a Muslim, Vice President of India The latter might some day become even President But these are rare instances

and the Orthodox Russian Church and the works of moderns like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Berdyaev and Pasternak, we find that even Soviet Russia, which is looked upon by some as barbarous and atheistic, has always been and is producing spirituality Human nature, I maintain, is uniform all over the world, and even as empirical experience and science, the metaphysical and mystical experiences of mankind have common features which do not allow us to brand any particular types of these as specially "Western" or "Eastern" To single out those strands one likes in European experience as genuinely European and reject the others as alien or Oriental is arbitrary, though eminent scholars have often committed this mistake Thus it is not difficult to come across books which characterize pantheism in European thought as Oriental, and theism in Indian thought as either due to Hebrew or Christian influence One would have at that rate to expurgate some of the best and most vital in each of these cultures I hold that God and eternal values, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, have revealed themselves to the best minds in every age and country, though in some periods of history some sort of crisis seems to be overpowering some nations rendering them impotent and uncreative

Basic Hindu Scriptures not opposed to Progress and Prosperity

As we have no evidence to know anything about the matters which I mentioned as significant for an encounter between the West and India in connection with the great civilizations of India of the remote past—the Mohenjodaro and the Harappa—we can only start with the Vedas We are not now concerned with the ...ture of Vedic deities and ways of worship, but the things for ...hich they were worshipped What were the life-ideals of the ...edic people? What was it they wanted and how did they seek to ...tain it? The first thing to be noted is that the Vedas (the two ...sic books — *Rg* and *Atharva*) do not anywhere mention this ...orld as a place of suffering, as something to be escaped The

Vedic people were not anxious to end their lives here and go to either heaven or into liberation They wanted long lives — of a hundred autumns (*saradah satam*) much progeny and good health And what did they want to do on earth? To eat well and drink (the Vedic people enjoyed meats and *Soma* wine) to have many possessions (kine and cattle horses and chariots pastures green and heaps of barley and wheat) to have the company of beautiful young women and many children mainly sons strong wise and masterful (*vira*) to conquer and weed out enemies to have innumerable friends and dependants and to enjoy domestic felicity and social harmony Wisdom [knowledge as to what there is (nature of reality) the principles and the powers governing the universe (*rta* and *devas*) and the ways of winning over these powers] and poetry were two of the things they counted even above material possessions

The Vedas describe life on earth more than heavenly life An Atharva Vedic hymn describes the earth as the support of life abode of men and women who can live happily on her bounty and as containing many wonders of nature The earth is like our mother it says The Rg Veda does not think of the sky and the things beyond it (heaven) more than the earth in fact there is no hymn addressed to *Dyaus* (heavens sky) alone, it is addressed always along with the earth Renunciation and release (*moksa*) are not mentioned in the Rg Veda There is of course no theory of transmigration in the Veda unless one likes to see it implied by a hymn addressed to the departed ancestors go thither and come back to the home free from blemishes Men in search of Brahman (*Brahmacarins*) are mentioned in one Rg Vedic and two Atharva Vedic verses but the *Sannyasin* (the recluse the ascetic wanderer) is conspicuous by his absence The *rsis* (the seers — the poets the knowers of truths) were almost always married men and women (sometimes) Even most of the Upanisadic *rsis* were married men great house holders (*maha salah*) We hear of only one great Upanisadic *rsi* Yajnavalkya a lover of beef arrogant and covetous who wanted to renounce

everything and go to the forest but then, perhaps, he ended up by going along with his wife And then the very same Upanisad by the example of King Janaka, who is mentioned so often and with such admiration, shows that even the wise (*jnanis*) need no renounce the world and become ascetics

The Rg Veda does not mention any hell It mentions heaven (*svarga*) only once or twice But then it is a rational hedonistic world, not ruled by any God It is full of song and dance, it is a world of light and immortality, it is full of bliss, all the wishes of its citizens are fulfilled, and the movements of its citizens are according to their wills (not God's) It is a world of freedom and enjoyment and there are many paths to go there The Rg Vedic heaven has no ruler evidently and one need not believe in a particular creed or perform only a particular type of ritual to go there *Those who have accomplished the istapurta (duties* religious and social) go there One need not go to forests and caves to go to heaven, in fact a forest does not *seem* to figure in the Rg Veda and only evil spirits inhabit caves Sane men live in the open sun lit world

The Atharva Veda highlights these trends more than the Rg Veda If it is earlier than the Rg Veda it means that the basic philosophy of life of the early Indians was positivistic, life-affirming and aggressive If it is later than the Rg Veda, it means that these tendencies which were already there in the Rg Veda found fuller development in the Atharva The ideal of the Atharva Vedic sages is to live happily for a hundred years In fact in some hymns a happy healthy and full life of a hundred years is described as immortality (*amrtatva*) [4] To achieve this is the *summum bonum* While in the Rg Veda prayer and sacrifice are among the frequently mentioned means of attaining happiness the Atharva Veda adds medicine and magic (*yatu, krtya, brahman*) also The magic of rivals and enemies one's own sins anger of gods and departed ancestors and diseases — these are the causes of our unhappiness The Atharva Veda implies a philosophy of aggression through witchcraft and magic one

a thousand cattle with horns gilded with pure gold Very few (most probably none) of the great Upanisadic sages were unmarried, and perhaps not more than two or three of them left their wives and went to forests

RENUNCIATION VERSUS ACTION

If "progress" means the perennial quest for better, more prosperous and happier life on earth, the Vedas are obsessed by that idea, and the Upanisads taken in their totality as a whole do not disparage it In a few Upanisadic passages (e g , the fifth Brahmana of *Brhadaranyaka*) we find sentiments expressed that the wise men who have found something more important and valuable than anything in this world, neither care for nor work for the things of this world (Cf , Aquinas, *vita contemplativa simpliciter melior est quam vita activa*) They rise above the world, they overcome the world But then in the same Upanisad we find examples of men like Janaka who were great sages as well as kings And there are other Upanisads like the Isa which assert that never should a man be inactive the wise man ought to know that the world is pervaded by God and knowing this he covets not another s possessions, but ceaselessly toils as long as he lives to get the things he needs There may be according to some Upanisads a few wise men who would not want to live in society, but would like to retire to forests to meditate and speculate But that need not be the general path for all people, and not even for those who have realized the self, as the literally numerous examples of householders who are *jnanis* illustrate Most of the Rsis whom we come across in the Upanisads the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were persons who made meditation speculation and teaching their occupations and lived in schools in sylvan suburbs and sometimes in accessible forests with wives, children and numerous disciples, in *asramas* (lit abodes of work), endowed with several acres of plantations, pastures, woodlands and cattle They never begged, but lived on agriculture and cattle-raising, they paid taxes to the king

The students who came to study under them were given free instruction and in return had to till, sow and reap, cultivate orchards and graze and rear cattle The *asramas* were not small huts hastily erected with bamboo sticks and leaves, a few of them were huge establishments or settlements with hundreds of families of teachers and bachelor students, both male and female At times the head of an *asrama* could entertain a royal retinue with splendid feasts for days The wealthy and the princes often came and resided with families for a number of days in these *asramas* in search of rest, wisdom and practical guidance They were the precursors of research institutes, universities and holiday resorts for rest cures To ignore all this and to think of *asramas* as small solitary cottages, dotting inaccessible forests where holy men only fasted and led ascetic lives and lived in mystic contemplation, is certainly poetic, but ignores the history and description of these establishments as given by the Ramayana and the Mahabharata

The Caste Problem

If we leave the Vedas, the books which are authoritative and ancient are the Grhya Sutras and the Smrtis The significant thing we find in these books is the idea of the four castes and the four life stages It cannot be denied that the central idea of these books seems to be that every man is born to an occupation, and that the persons belonging to the top castes should go through the four life stages—celibacy and study, marriage and social responsibility, retirement to a forest along with one's wife towards the end of life and lastly, the stage of complete renunciation of all comforts and contacts with persons and places While occupation was considered to be predetermined by one's birth these books assert that a man should prosper in his own station in life to the best of his ability, build up a good fortune, see his sons well settled and daughters happily married and then only retire To retire before that is a sin Of course for the *Sudras* the last caste all this was out of the

question A Sudra's life was insecure, he had no right to prosper and become a master and naturally he could not retire His position was similar to that of the slaves in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire

While the Grhya Sutras and the Smrtis described the four castes and four life stages, one can justifiably wonder whether this scheme was ever anything more than a norm of social organization held up before people One wonders whether the Brahmanas ever held the position which these books aver they held, i e, as the guides, preceptors and mentors of kings and of great merchant princes The Itihasas and the Puranas carefully and critically read do not show any evidence of Brahmana dominance in secular matters [8] Some Brahmana priests may have traded on people's superstitions and at times may have tyrannized society by acting as provocative agents and by fomenting factions and political troubles and finding themselves in the victorious camp as advisers and guides But they never in general were regarded as the highest caste, except after the loss of independence due to the Muslim conquest, when Hindu royal dynasties and Ksatriyas in general fell on evil days [8a] Common sense shows that without an extensive organization, themselves unarmed and lacking political power, the Brahmanas as a caste could not have been a power in the land Individual Brahmanas were of course sometimes prime ministers or even generals and sometimes great teachers of Brahman, or surgery, or astrology, or astronomy Such men were highly respected as befitted their positions or learning But that an ordinary Brahmana merely because he was a Brahmana was respected by princes and merchants is inconceivable To say that there was no Brahmana who was not highly learned and unselfish would be untrue As in every other country the rulers and officers of the state formed the upper class in ancient India, then came the great merchants and financiers then the soldiers and artisans (the professional classes—farmers carpenters, petty retail merchants, weavers, etc), and lastly came the labourers who had neither capital nor specialized skill Men who devoted

themselves to learning and the various sciences and the poets stood apart from all these and were respected by all of them, but in actual power and social prestige were next to the princes, ministers, generals and the great merchants The ordinary priests who officiated at marriages, births and deaths ministered in temples and were called in for offering special worship on prescribed days or for special purposes were given no more respect than the middle classes We know this to be the situation if we read the Itihasa–Puranas critically, but from folk-lore, inscriptions social customs, the Kavyas and Natakas and from books like the Brhat Katha, the Pancatantra and political and moral treatises, this is very clear When in the Itihasas we read that royalty bowed before a Bharadvaja or an Agastya and heeded their counsels, we should not forget that they were outstanding scholars and sages heads of great *asrama* establishments with thousands of disciples and huge endowments, and with friendship and contacts with several ruling princes The fact today an Einstein or a Russell is esteemed and hearkened to by Presidents and Prime Ministers or entertained with respect and solicitude by princes and millionaires does not prove that scientists and philosophers form the upper caste in the modern world

The above reading of India's social history is confirmed by the study of Pali sources[9] There in recorded folk-lore mythology and fables and in the dialogues of the Buddha and accounts of his life, we find that the ruling princes the nobles, the generals and great merchants were the upper classes in ancient India Only in the theory of Brahmanical books we find Brahmana supremacy[10], but that was a dream which never came true, except in the decadent days of India, when there were no powerful princes and generals and no great merchants Again the history of India shows that some of the greatest kings were not Ksatriyas the great Pandavas and the Mauryans to note but two classic examples were not Ksatriyas[11], though they had some Ksatriya blood in them And many Hindu kings of later days had *Sudra* blood and often non Indian blood in them From all this, I wish to

vengeance almost

The Recluse in India

As regards the other idea—of four life stages—that too only remained a mere norm of Brahmanical books[13] We have no evidence to believe that except a microscopic minority of Brahmanas and a very few princes, the majority of Hindus ever followed the life stages And even in the cases where we read of some kings who renounced their kingdoms we read only of their retiring to *asramas*, which were already in existence or were established by them They became the Rajarsis royal sages, and sometimes became discoverers of new sciences or of a new path to liberation They did not become ascetic wanderers and beg We have also instances of men and women not marrying and devoting their entire time and energy to intense effort *(tapas)* towards the discovery, meditation and teaching of truth Others remained unmarried but devoted themselves actively to the affairs of the state (e g Bhisma) A perusal of Sanskritic and Pali sources once again shows that the "four stages of life" as a compulsory routine remained only a norm Most men and women went only through the first two stages and never went into the third the idea of the four stages is foreign to the Vedas and though some sages became wanderers and renunciants in the Upanisadic age, we do not hear of the four stages as compulsory there This scheme appears only in latter-day smrtis, but some schools of philosophy did not regard this to be in accordance with Vedic teaching. One of the most orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, the Mimamsa does not tolerate the idea of renunciation Man should throughout his life remain in the world discharging his duties and responsibilities as laid down in the Veda, if he has developed serenity and detachment, he need not perform the various rituals and types of worship laid down in the Veda for obtaining specific results in this world and after life, but he should never renounce the obligations that befit his position in life and become a recluse

To be called a shaven headed ascetic (*mundi*) was a term of abuse according to the Mimamsakas

As the Upanisads and the Buddhist books show, there were recluses and mendicant orders in the later-Upanisadic and the Pre-Buddhistic India But they were few The idea that every Hindu of higher castes should end up as a *sannyasin* (renunciant) did not appear yet[13a] The popularity of Jainism and of Buddhism and the personal histories of Mahavira and the Buddha who renounced the world and became mendicants made *sannyasa* (renunciation) fashionable The rise of well organised orders, construction of monasteries and the lavish endowment of them by kings like Asoka made them attractive and like the Church in Medieval Europe, the monk's life became a profession and a career in India also It was Buddhist influence that led the Hindu smrti writers to require that *all* upper caste Hindus should also practise renunciation in life as the final thing But it never gained ground, because books like the Gita and systems like the Mimamsa opposed the idea, arguing that it is a fantastic idea, and that true renunciation is to develop a sense of detachment and yet to continue to work for one's own and the world's spiritual and material welfare Also, most normal men and women dislike to leave their houses and properties, the society and the occupations that interest them and go to the forests to live on wild fruits and leaves like primitives or, much worse, to go begging from house to house Even the Buddha did not ask *all* his disciples to give up worldly life, he had innumerable lay disciples So was the case with Mahavira After the disappearance of Buddhism and the decay of Jainism the Mimamsa philosophy and the Bhakti religion (akin to that taught in the Gita) were dominant in India Worship of the deities like Siva and Visnu, occasional performances of Vedic sacrifices and leading of a life guided by the Vedic and the Bhakti norms was the religion of India prior to Sankara His senior contemporary, the great Kumarila and his group were uncompromising foes of the philosophies of negation and

Sankara just as in other countries lured by a great personality like St Francis or St Ignatius Loyola thousands became monks Just as it would be incorrect to characterize the Middle Ages of Europe as dominated exclusively by monasticism asceticism and piety and to label them as the Dark Ages it would be wrong to say that Buddhist and Jaina monasticism and Hindu *sannyasa* sum up the entire Indian spirit of even those ages The rise of Universities formation of guilds the feudal system the phenomenon of city republics knightly love and chivalry rationalism and systematic theology, and architecture and art found in the cathedrals monasteries and medieval castles — all these were there in the European Middle Ages Similarly, Asoka s edicts the Dhammapada the Bodhisattva ideal Ajanta and Amaravati frescoes and sculpture were the products of Buddhism and so too had Jainism many things to its credit To forget these and similar manifestations of the Hindu spirit and to brand them all as life negating and other worldly is to distort Indian history

Planning Democracy and the Hindu Spirit

Kautilya s Arthasastra is one of the authoritative books which gives us abundant information about the social and political structure of ancient India[14] Kautilya was the Prime Minister of Chandragupta the Mauryan emperor (B C 323 298) grandfather of Asoka Asoka s edicts and what little we know about the South Indian kingdoms show that in essentials almost all Indian princes followed the Kautilyan form of polity and government A perusal of the Arthasastra shows that the classic Indian state was a planned welfare state One of the things with which Kautilya was most concerned was the food problem In those days famines were frequent the population was vast as always in India The provision of a guarantee of food for all people at all times was according to Kautilya one of the principal tasks of the government To achieve this Kautilya introduced planned economy based on extensive

conception of the state From this one can justifiably conclude that from remote times, India was not averse to the ideas of planning for prosperity and state control Economic liberalism and haphazard growth of enterprises—agricultural and industrial—due to random private initiative were foreign to India Though in the pre-Buddhistic age and in the Buddha's time there were tribal republics like those of the Licchavis and the Vajjians theirs were democracies in which governmental participation was usually limited to higher caste male citizens But we do not hear much of these republics after the rise of the Mauryan empire Monarchy was thus the normal type of government in India combined (and this is important) with the *pancayat* system of village administration For all practical purposes each village was autonomous and was ruled by an elected council of five (*pancayat*)[16], though usually the council consisted of the well-to-do and the upper castes in the community, and sometimes the elections were merely formal the offices being passed on from generation to generation among certain powerful families The classic Indian state was thus a planned welfare state based on autonomous democratically governed villages And if today India is again trying to adopt planning state control and the *pancayat* system, it only means she is semiconsciously reviving her old traditions The lack of any significant opposition to Nehru's socialism and limitation of the private sector in industry as well as agriculture proves that these things do not shock the Indian mind and that they are not alien to the Indian genius

Buddhism, Suffering and World negation Right Understanding of These

As has already been indicated, the doctrine that this world is full of suffering, that it is an illusion and that the wise man should seek to withdraw himself from it and constantly look forward to liberation does not find a place in the Vedas, the Gita, the Grhya Sutras, or the Smrtis which are the basic

books of the Hindus The Ramayana and the Mahabharata in general fight against this idea A few Upanisadic passages do say that the wise man does not care for this world and its goods, but even they do not contain any doctrine of suffering or illusion (Only a late Upanisad, the Svetasvetara, refers to *maya*, but *maya* there is not illusion) The doctrine of suffering came into vogue with the Buddha But he did not preach universal renunciation nor did he ask people to be indifferent to pleasure and comfort His was the *Madhyama marga* the middle path between sensual indulgence and crude hedonism on the one hand and world negation and asceticism on the other hand The Buddha himself lived well, ate good food and meat, clad himself in silks and lived in scented chambers He was a majestic dynamic personality, *aggressive and over bearing Since the world is a fleeting one* impermanent, transient subject to the law of transmigration one should not go on craving for these worldly goods, but free oneself from craving And it is the fleetingness, the momentariness and the tiresome rotation of birth old age disease and death that constitute suffering The wise man should not remain passive or indifferent, but should bestir himself put in earnest effort think right thoughts do the right things, and say the right words and win the goal that is to be reached by doing so Effort exertion and earnestness—these are keywords in the Buddha's teaching as it is found in the Dhammapada the Suttanipata and other Pali sources Revelling in a kind of mystic trance because the world is so woeful is not held up as an ideal in any of the basic Pali sources, or even the early Sanskrit sources of Buddhism And since the world is full of suffering it is the duty of a wise man to alleviate it as far as possible Ministering to the poor and the needy, nursing the sick, consolation of the distressed, and sympathy for and conversion of the sinners (dacoits murderers and prostitutes) were the duties which the Buddha and the great Buddhist monks *practised* and taught It was because Buddhism was of this kind that it could successfully

Why are Indians thought to be Otherworldly and Brooding?

In *asramas* of antiquity and in the well-organized Buddhist universities investigation of ways and means of promoting the happy life was assiduously and continuously undertaken While the great personalities and books of all these three different religions asserted that material and spiritual well being and progress were equally important (to wit the Vedas, Gita and the Buddha), some did assert that the things of the spirit were vastly more important than the things of this world while there were no doubt a few who said that to those who realized the spiritual reality, the things and affairs of this world would not at all be of any concern After the loss of independence, subsequent to the Muslim conquests before the situation in the country stabilized itself and again after the British occupation and enslavement of India and before a conscious renaissance took place, this last kind of outlook coloured the mentality and actions of some of the best men It was an expression of a kind of complex an attempt to develop indifference to material well being and progress and assert the spiritual superiority of India and gloat over Islam s and Europe s inferior spirituality Did not the fox in Aesop s fables say that grapes were sour? But this was a passing mood which was effectively checked by men like Vidyaranya and Samarth Ramadas in Medieval India Raja Rama Mohan Roy (1772 1833) Swami Vivekananda (1863 1902) Tagore (1861 1941) and others in our age

Classic India was a great power and in some periods of history it was a great maritime and colonizing power Long before Buddhism spread there Hinduism was prevalent in Kamboja Pegu and Champa And it was during the period of the glorious days of Buddhism and Jainism that political power cultural afflorescence and colonial expansion were at their height Indian influence was once felt from Madagascar to Tonkin and now also even a casual tourist who looks at the Angkor Vat temple Balinese sculpture or dances Zen Buddhist practices or the Mongolian

lose their exclusive point of view and made them *realize* that there can be more than one way of reaching God, that all religions are entitled to equal respect and that proselytization is an evil This truth was not unknown to the Indians, the Rg Veda, the Gita and Asoka's edicts were aware of the value of tolerance, the multi-facetedness of truth and the possibility of attaining the good life and salvation in more than one way But then they relearnt this truth the hard bitter way with reference to a non-Indian religion and through the impact of cruel, ruthless conquerors That was good Not only the Hindus, but Muslims like Alberuni, Akbar, Rahim Khankhanan, Abul Fazl, and Dara Shikoh realized this truth As the great Abul Fazl said in his Ain-i-Akbari "every man of sense and understanding knows that the best way of worshipping God consists in allaying the distress of the times and in improving the conditions of the poor" This reads like an echo of Vyasa's sentiments in the Mahabharata *yad bhuta hitam atyantam tat satyam iti dharana, Paropakarah punyaya papaya parapidanam*

The Islamic contact with India produced a rift in India's culture only in the first decades, but later through the coexistence of the two peoples with their different religions and traditions a new way of life, a new culture evolved The great Mughal Babur noted this Common administration (fusing Isla mic and Hindu systems of polity) a new common language (Urdu) spread of religious movements based on love for God and fellow men (Sufism and Bhakti), and development of new literature and art were the results of this fusion Islam in India received an Indian colouring, and Hinduism after the Islamic contact was never the old Hinduism Neither was worse off for it The verse quoted at the beginning composed in Persian by a Hindu poet of Akbar's court praises this synthesis

Later when due to the rise of fanatic Muslim princes and rebellious Hindu chieftains both of whom lacked the political vision and the ability to reconcile and coexist, this synthesis was jeopardised, there arose again political and cultural disintegra-

tion and an opportune time for the British penetration into India Though in the beginning this produced a shock and resulted in cultural chaos once again it proved to be providential After the Muslim conquest and subjugation North India lost creativity it became busy understanding this new culture and religion which came to her and her energy was spent in adjusting herself to these Europe through the British brought India an unified administration and the scientific and technological achievements of the last few centuries Again she had to understand these grasp their import and digest them That she has done this to some extent is evident by the way new independent India is going about

The Problem of Cultural Coherence

Will not this produce an incoherence a hybrid civilization? My answer is no After all science and technology in Europe were not existent from eternity Only from the seventeenth century they have had this remarkable phenomenon and that too in Western Europe mainly If Christianity European medieval culture theology and philosophy could put up with science and technology and achieve a new culture cannot India do the same? And the fact that in India we did not have any such furore shock and consternation which in Europe followed the discoveries of Galileo Darwin and others shows that the Indian spirit is more hospitable to science New ideas experiments and novel ways of living do not startle India She adopts them eagerly The way in which universal adult franchise parliamentary democracy, industrialization birth control constitutional abolition of the caste system and reform of Hindu Law have been enthusiastically accepted by the large majority of Indians shows their responsiveness and ability to assimilate This open mind and receptiveness arise because of India s non-exclusive point of view The principle of contradiction and exclusiveness of truth are not held to in India with the tenacity with which the West clings to them Eclecticism and system building with the help of diverent elements is congenial to her Moreover India has always been

more pragmatic than Europe. Her philosophy, her art, her love were almost always pragmatic.[14a] The so-called theoretical truth—truth for the sake of merely knowing, and fundamental science did not ever interest her much. Any science and art for her was of value only as it contributed to a comfortable life here or to salvation. And all useful things gained in appeal and value for her. She has seen the utility of technology, how it contributes to material comfort and progress and conquest over nature, things for which she has always yearned. She has therefore taken to science and technology with enthusiasm. But unless she develops theoretical interests and a concern with fundamental sciences, like the U. S. A. until very recently, she may for a long time remain content to master and use technology, without herself creatively contributing to the basic sciences.

If Athenian philosophy, Christianity, which was produced in the Middle Eastern deserts by Aramaic speaking peoples, Stoicism which was invented by Macedonians and Phoenicians, and Roman Law could be welded together into what is loosely called European culture, cannot India take in European science and technology and fuse them with her classic religion and philosophy? And has she not already done so to a considerable degree as the writings of Rama Mohan Roy, Tagore, Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan show? The Indian socialism of Nehru is itself a fine synthesis of Western democracy, ideas of planning, Asokan tolerance, Gandhian *ahimsa*, *pancayats* and village autonomy. Any great culture, European or Indian, contains more than one strand. In the writings of men like Abelard and Aquinas one can find the influence of Greek philosophy and Arab interpretations of Greek ideas and Christian convictions, and in Byzantine culture one finds the meeting of Europe and the Middle East. None the less the *Summa Theologica* and Byzantine art are very coherent. Similarly, Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, Tagore's *Gora* and Nehru's democracy are a fine blending of the European and the Indian spirits. Maybe they are not perfect, but India does not take them to be final

She is right now struggling to evolve a yet greater and more perfect culture Culture is not like a bloodless mathematical system, completely coherent and logical Like a great painting or music, it contains a blending of discordant elements fused together in a manner which defies description The life as lived by a people and thoughts as articulated by them are culture, and much that looks opposed and incompatible when looked at in abstraction is reconciled and harmonised by the very process of living and thinking In Europe this happened many times and in India too If Christianity which started with an eschatological outlook, otherworldliness and indifference to labour[17] could adjust itself to so many new forces and influences, absorbing some and coming to terms with others (one can think of the forces released by Renaissance and Aufklarung, the Reformation Humanism, the French Revolution, development of science, especially astronomy and biology, industrialism and technology), there is no reason why Hinduism Buddhism and Jainism cannot do the same In these three religions aversion to the world was not stronger than in Christianity[18] And to think that the average Hindu of the modern world cares more for his religion than the average Christian or the Jew of England or the U S A for what is literally said in the Bible is a gratuitous assumption The industrial and technological backwardness of India is due to its huge population lack of adequate natural resources, climate and above all foreign domination and not due to its caste system or lack of a concept of progress In other countries where there is no caste and where people are presumably favourable to progress (e g , Spain, Portugal, Italy Brazil) we find industrial backwardness as compared to other countries (the U K West Germany, or the U S A) Similar reasons operate in India also And just as Byzantine Christianity and Confucianism had to succumb to the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions (and Catholicism in some East European countries) if in future Communism gains India as its victim it will be not because of the weakness of Hinduism but because of the failure of

democratic Indian governments to organize people to produce more and feed themselves and live well and to weed out corruption and inequalities in wealth For the people today what matters is the opportunity to lead decent lives free from basic wants and Hinduism never was and is not against it

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CHAPTER TWO



India: History and Atavism

Amaury de Riencourt's *The Soul of India*[1] is a significant and provocative book The author is a widely read and extensively travelled Frenchman in his middle forties, who combines perceptive scholarship with acute thinking His ambition is to develop "a comprehensive philosophy of history" with which he seeks to study and interpret all human societies In this volume he treats India in this way

History, according to de Riencourt is both cyclical and linear though the latter is more evident as we concentrate our attention on it Its cyclical rhythm shows a definite pattern of recurrences viz the birth, growth and death of societies followed by other societies in formation which feed on them The passage from culture to civilization is the great cycle evident in all history Culture for de Riencourt is the youth of a society awakening to new life, resulting from the invasion of an old, decadent and overcivilized people by dynamic barbarians When in due course the old and the primitive *fuse, a new outlook and a new creativity in all fields emerge,*

and thereby a flexible growing and vital society is formed This is culture When such a society has reached its zenith when having exhausted its creativity it crystallises and merely digests and spreads what it has achieved it becomes a civilization It then falls prey to disruption and conquests by dynamic invaders

It must be pointed out that this interpretation of history is not original it echoes the philosophical theory or theoretical comprehension (*ibar*) of universal history which seeks to penetrate through the external events to the internal nature and secrets of history to understand events and apply this knowledge in practice as developed by the great Muslim thinker Ibn Khaldun (1332 1406) of Tunis Defining culture as a property of man Khaldun distinguished between its earlier form primitive culture (*Umran badawi*) and its developed form civilization *(Hadara)* Arising from man s needs which compel him to associate with others and form a society culture leads to civilization because of man s desire for power riches and leisure Like living organisms societies are born they grow and develop and gradually come to an end When a civilization reaches its peak and complacency sets in habits of comfort and luxury generate physical weaknesses and moral vice Internal dissensions absence of long range plans decrease in economic development lessening of stamina and originality and despair — all these then manifest themselves Such a civilization either withers away like the wick in a lamp in which oil is exhausted or it falls a prey to an outside invasion by a strong civilized state or by a dynamic primitive people All this Ibn Khaldun developed in his *Kitab-al ibar* Khaldun also emphasised the importance of *ibar* for appropriate present action De Riencourt follows this when he says there can be no political wisdom without historical perspective and has pointed out that great men of action needed this and to acquire it studied history

De Riencourt with much learning and brilliance applies this

theoretical framework to interpret Indian history in a new way and unveil the "Indian Soul" Whether we accept his premises and conclusions or not, he has produced an important book, which deserves to be seriously studied by all who have a concern for India's present and future Many here and abroad appear to think that India is now emerging from its medieval feudal age and is becoming "modern" De Riencourt, on the other hand, believes that India long ago passed the point at which the West arrived in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries Indian civilization insofar as it is self-contained and autonomous, completed its historical cycle centuries ago, its growth was "terminated" long ago, its is not a case of "arrested' development[3]

A resume of de Riencourt's interpretation of Indian history may now be given When the Harappa Mohenjodaro civilization reached its peak and started imperceptibly declining following the cyclic law, the barbarian Aryans conquered it and gave rise to a new culture The Vedic Age was the Medieval Age of India, which was succeeded by the Modern Age — that of the Upanisads They mark the climax" of India's creativity, in them Indian culture assumed its 'final shape" By then India had passed through all the historical phases through which Europe was to later pass by the time the Reformation occurred In the post Upanisadic period Indian culture started its slow decline The transitional age between the Upanisads and the Buddha was India's Age of Enlightenment, "the first and the last time' (*sic*) when the Indian outlook was strictly intellectual Buddhism brought in the twilight of Indian culture, it marked that culture s weary exhausted mood It closed India's cultural growth and prefaced the coming of civilization Thirst for political unity and social peace along with economic prosperity promoted the idea of Caesarism a universal state under one powerful ruler In the Mauryan Age — the Age of Caesarism — this was actualised The

' supreme genius of Indian civilization" expressed itself in the caste system After the downfall of the Mauryan universal empire, 'the living soul of Indian civilization withdrew from an active shaping of the world' From then on till alien civilizations came and conquered it, India was left with "a universal society' but not a universal state The sun of Indian civilization thereafter set, the civilization of South India and South East Asia were only its reflections — moonlight civilizations " Following the historical law mentioned above, Indian civilization was overcome by the Islamic and the Mughal Age was the moonlight, a reflection of the sun of Islamic civilization Owing to a similar historical necessity, the British Empire arose in India developed and disappeared In the nineteenth century there took place a "cultural awakening" — not "a cultural development" — in India which was only 'a reflection of the last phase of Europe s own culture' Later occurred India's cultural revolt against the West, the revolt against the forcible imposition of an ' atomistic culture ' by a people who instinctively sought "to retrieve a monistic, all inclusive *Weltanschauung*" Then came Gandhi who made Hinduism dynamic, set in motion ' dormant elements ' of Indian culture and rooted Indian nationalism in the immeasurably deep soil of India's old civilization ' As India ceased to acquiesce in the British colonial rule and as Europe lost its sense of purpose and self confidence after the two world wars and declined culturally the British Empire fell, and Independence came to India Such in brief is de Riencourt's understanding of Indian history which he thinks, explains contemporary developments and throws some light on the future

While interpretations of history can neither be demonstrated to be correct nor incorrect the above interpretation is rather a strange one It is difficult to believe that more than two thousand years ago India passed through all the phases of history through which Europe had been passing in the last and

present centuries, and that her 'terminated' culture was just at a standstill since then * Cannot we similarly interpret European history, if we want? One can for example, arbitrarily say that Italian civilization reached its zenith in the Augustan Age, then started its decline and from the time of the fall of Rome it has been sterile as it "terminated itself By strait-jacketing facts and making sweeping generalizations about "the ethos" and 'the soul' of Rome and Italy, about the passivity and pessimism of Stoicism the other-worldliness of Christianity and its being a "reflection" and synthesis of various oriental beliefs and practices it is possible to concoct a hotchpotch "philosophy" of history with reference to Italy Or, for example, one can so interpret French history as to show that the most brilliant period of its civilization was ushered in by Henry IV, and that the cycle of this civilization ended with the close of the rule of Louis XIV, the Cartesian synthesis being the highest expression of French genius * Then came the weary, sceptical, rationalistic age of the Encyclopaedists and the Enlightenment, which brought in the Revolution which failing miserably to realise its proclaimed ideals of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality ended in Caesarism, since when French culture has remained sterile All subsequent developments in French philosophy literature science and art could be declared to be unoriginal and merely feeble expressions of the prolongation of the momentum that did not yet spend itself out in the previous great age The Cartesian period could be called the Modern Age of France and the period of the Encylopaedists for the first and the last time" the one strictly intellectual age of France, with as much justice as de Riencourt dubbed the Upanisad c Age the Modern Age and the post Upanisadic Age the one truly intellectual age through which India passed Like the teaching of the Buddha Comte s (1798–1857) Positivism can be dismissed with the pronouncement that it was a practical utilitarian and

*In a letter to Holmes Laski said Descartes is the only French Philosopher of the first eminence

rational expression of an exhausted weary society threatened with cultural sterility Saint-Simon (1760-1825) said that was the age of criticism, negation, dissolution and spiritual chaos, which could be only terminated by a return to the Middle Ages — an organic age Since then France, it might be said, has been languishing without producing anything new, great and significant Interpretations of this sort may evoke sensational interest, and also gain for their authors reputation for originality in some quarters, but it is doubtful whether they have any other value They of course can neither be logically disproved, nor proved

Leaving aside this interpretation, de Riencourt has a number of penetrating comments on various aspects of the Indian mentality It is he says totally indifferent to history and the time process Concentrating its attention on eternity, and almost exclusively aware of Space, it has forgotten Time The reason for this is suggested to be the geographical environment of the Indian man Space, it is contended, is the domain of plurality, whereas time unites in its flow all elements Space has no directional movement, whereas time has Cultures dominated by awareness of space revel in diversity, in polytheism and indifference to history, whereas cultures which are time-conscious have the reverse characteristics The former have no sense of purpose or direction whereas the latter have [8] In quest of the timeless Absolute, space cultures try to escape from history and time Monism, of which they are so fond of, is an attempt to recover the primordial unity abolished by creation It has been a trite saying of many Europeans and some modern Indians like Nirad Chaudhuri, whom de Riencourt quotes that India never cared for history and historical studies Anyone who has carefully studied the Puranas and the Itihasas knows that India cared for history no less than other ancient civilizations Even in the West, the ancients considered ' historical knowledge is impossible'", and till recently for a

long time in the West too history was considered and treated as the most humble form of knowledge while philosophy was considered as the highest [8] I showed long ago that some Hindu seers were as much conscious of God active in history as the Hebrew prophets were[9] The idea that monism[10] is the result of an attempt to abolish time and return to the primordial unity was perhaps suggested by Mircea Eliade s phenomenological studies but they do also show that in other cultures which flourished in other countries and climates too the myth of the eternal return was prevalent

Apparently not having studied with care Upanisads like the Katha and the Svetasvetara the Gita the writings of Ramanuja and Madhva and the hymns of Alvars and Nayanars de Riencourt asserts that polytheism is the instinctive religion of India and that it never developed consistent and satisfactory monotheism Satisfactory to whom? Do the monotheisms of Moses and Isaiah or of Aquinas and Calvin yield universal satisfaction? Could a Ghazali accept the Trinity as in tune with monotheism? In their spiritual and philosophic worth Ramanuja Madhva and others do not fall behind any other monotheist If Ramanuja has his Sri others have the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost One is reminded of what Unamuno said about the Holy Family in *The Tragic Sense of Life*

India de Riencourt thinks is polytheistic it is a land of political diversity and social plurality it is interested in Yoga the integration of personality Therefore he argues Indians have non unified egos split or multiple personalities within single individuals This implies that only when an entire society is monolithic having a steam rolling uniform culture and unity of belief and action in all spheres — religion politics economics and sociology — its members can be assumed to have unified egos Perhaps ants and bees have the most unified egos for their societies have no diversity and plurality Were Spartan egos more unified than Athenian because theirs

is accepted, Indian history has been in every age one of the most intelligible and significant Further, to anyone not obsessed by a strait theory held to be absolute truth, dismissal of all the post-Mauryan Hindu, Buddhist, Jaina and Muslim achievements in literature arts, philosophy and administration as petrified terminations of a civilization would appear to be most absurd What was done in the British and the post-British periods too was not a negligible accomplishment It is easy to brush all this away, just as one can make statements like the following There has arisen no poet in England since Shakespeare and Milton, and in Germany and Italy since Goethe and Dante, Hume was the last great philosopher of England, Hegel of Germany and Descartes of France, or, one could even say, philosophy terminated with Plato and Aristotle, and some did say so * To sum up, it makes little sense to say there has been no progress in India since Asoka died

I do not know which is "the key" if there is one for understanding Indian culture, but it is certainly not total indifference to history No other culture was more concerned with this world, with material prosperity and sensual pleasure than Indian culture No other people prayed more fervently than Indians for long life progeny and perpetuation of their works and thoughts in this world One of the classical Indian philosophies (Mimamsa) conceives the world to be eternal and fully real it was always like this and will be so for ever Only one Hindu and two Buddhistic schools of philosophy support what may be called the "illusion" theory and two of them emphasize the empirical reality of the world and reject subjectivism So it is indeed foolish to take the negativistic otherworldly literature of India to be completely and exclusively representative of its ethos, just as it would be to take the Desert Anchorites and Monks of Christendom as representing

*e g The great German historian Leopold Ranke, and Whitehead who said European philosophy is "a series of footnotes to Plato

the Western spirit.[13] Further, an ascetic abstemiousness and other worldliness may foster, as Max Weber has shown, frugality and hard work, which lead to prosperity. The Jainas of India are a classic example of this, with their *ahimsa* and extreme asceticism they have become leaders in commerce and industry. The most ravishingly sensuous frescoes and sculptures in India were accomplished by Buddhist and Jaina monks, and one of the most sensitive, melodious and beautiful love poems in the world (tending to border on the erotic) was composed by a great *Bhakta*, Jayadeva. Finally, world affirmation never found a better expression than in Krsna and the Buddha[14], and in the Tantra and the Pusti Marga (the path of strength) of Vallabha. In no other religion is delight in life and nature and their full unconditional acceptance so manifest. The brooding East unmindful of this world may be good poetry, but a false stereotype.

Relying on Alberuni, some talk about Hindu xenophobia, spirit of exclusiveness and hatred of foreigners. All peoples somehow or other consider themselves to be better than others. The Greeks looked down upon all non-Greeks as barbarians, while the Jews' contempt for the uncircumcised and the Muslims' hatred of the Kafirs is well known. The Chinese always thought of themselves as a superior race. The concept of Holy Russia, its uniqueness and its special mission in the world are not unknown to Dostoevsky's readers. Europeans fancied themselves — many still do — to be the civilizers and saviours of the Asians and the Africans and considered themselves to be superior. Oriental 'despotism, dishonesty, sensuousness, flattery — these are alluded to in many Western writings. Even a great modern philosopher like Karl Jaspers still thinks that Europe has some special superiority and virtue over other continents[15]. It is well-known how the British, the French and other European peoples each consider themselves to be superior to other Europeans. All this shows that there never were a people who considered themselves to be just as good as the

others only So it is nothing strange if Indians too considered and consider themselves to be a greater people than others It is difficult fully to believe and realize the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man There is also nothing surprising if the Indians of his day hated Alberuni, and his compatriots who came to loot and conquer India, root out its way of life and give it a new religion The hatred must have been mutual What is surprising is India's welcome extended to foreigners countless times in its history—to the Arabs in Malabar, the Parsis in Western India, the Jesuits and earlier Christian missionaries—even in the medieval times Indian civilization incorporated into its social structure all foreign invaders without ever destroying their distinct characters and personalities The result was castes like Rajputs and Jats who became as much Indian as anyone else Even in our times the relations between the Indians and the British were on the whole most cordial Some of the most intimate friends of Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and others were British Indo-British friendship is indefinable, unique and, as Queen Elizabeth recently said is the despair of historians

Indian culture never completely assimilated and absorbed the foreigners and barbarians making them disappear as separate entities, as the Chinese did and try to do even now (e g in Tibet) *Even when Indian civilization spread in South East* Asia, it never went as a conquering civilization out to civilize others, it always respected as de Riencourt recognises, the political autonomy and cultural freedom of the countries to which it penetrated The Chinese, as he says did just the reverse, they tried to "conquer assimilate and absorb" into the "all encompassing Chinese civilization—the *only* Civilization" in their eyes While many other cultures including the Christian considered it their duty to fight and overcome by force other cultures, Indian culture enjoined upon its members not to fight with other cultures

Finally, there is no religion and civilization other than the

Hindu which took over so many elements from others Countless foreigners — travellers, scholars and administrators — Greek Chinese, Portuguese and British — have spoken about Indian hospitality and receptivity to men and ideas It is strange to see the charge of xenophobia being repeated by persons like Nirad Choudhury and de Riencourt on the authority of Alberuni, who came in the camp of conquerors and had no opportunity to see how Afghans, Turks and Mughals later settled down here and fell in love with this land and were in turn loved developing what Babur called the ' Hindusthani Way of Life '

De Riencourt depending upon *Chand Raisa* that epic about Prithvi Raj, refers to Hindu self pity and hypocrisy Here again he echoes views already expressed by Nirad Chaudhuri It is true that when foreign invasions occurred professional soldiers alone were left to deal with them while the rulers alone concerned themselves with politics, this was because of the social structure, which was self governing and highly specialized, operating through the institutions of caste and *pancayat* and which more or less accepted any rulers that proved themselves strong and able But it must be remembered that tyrannicide was recognised by Indian political theory, and the Puranas and Buddhist Jatakas refer to tyrants overthrown by people Even after the establishment of the Muslim rule the examples of Rana Sanga Vijayanagar Rana Pratap and Shivaji show that Hindus were not so very passive and quiet In the overthrow of dynasties — including the Mughal — and kingdoms Hindus did play their part [14a] It is charged that the Hindus hated and abhorred their conquerors, but still worked for them enjoyed the gifts and honours given by them, and when they lost that power despised them One wonders what else could anybody do in the circumstances Did not the peoples of Judea Gaul and Britain do the same for their Roman conquerors ? What in turn did Rome do when Attila sacked it ? And when Muslim conquerors overran the Latin countries established kingdoms

in Spain and Sicily, what did the Europeans do? Also what did anybody do in Asia or Europe when the Mongol conquerors irresistibly galloped across these continents on their swift horses? The European provinces in the Ottoman Empire cannot also be forgotten in this context In the Napoleonic period France conquered Germany, and in our times the Nazis invaded France During the occupation, what did the conquered do? What are the Captive' nations in Europe doing now? All conquered or captive peoples all the slaves and the downtrodden, hate their rulers or masters, yet hiding their hatred work for them, are pleased when the masters confer favours on them, and delighted when these masters cease to be masters This is normal human psychology The conquered who loves his conqueror and the slave who likes to continue in his slavery are far gone, their souls have been corroded Every conquered people in history did what their conquerors wanted as long as circumstances forced them to do so, the martyrs—religious or political—have always been few compared to the population When the tide turned and the rulers became weak, they were mercilessly overthrown and despised Even within a country with an indigenous ruling class this could happen For a long, long time the regimes of the Bourbons and the Czars prevailed People wailed and bore their sorrows they hated their rulers, but feared and obeyed them and prized their favours Many took all this as divinely ordained Then the power of the rulers disintegrated due to various factors including peoples' increasing consciousness of their lot Revolutions occurred and rulers who were previously looked upon with reverence and awe were insulted and hanged It is difficult to accept all this as hypocrisy When nothing else appears to be possible all people accept suffering and wait for God to act Toynbee advises the West to do so now in its predicament

De Riencourt frequently talks about Hindu atavism In all countries in some periods people suddenly become conscious of

their past and in imagination picture it as full of glory and grandeur and seek to realise it The Renaissance looked back to the heroic classical age of Greece and Rome and wanted to recapture it [15] In the Reformation, in Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, and in the counter-Reformation, lurked a desire to go back to the simple faith of Apostolic Christianity After the Second World War so much has been written and said about the roots of Western culture, and the heritage of Graeco-Roman and Hebrew Christian cultures, and the need to appreciate and appropriate them When the present Elizabethan Age began in England, people nostalgically thought of the possibility of the previous great Elizabethan glory returning, and De Gaulle envisages the recapture of the ancient grandeur and mission of France Mussolini used to talk of the resurgence of Roman glory Karl Jaspers thinks the world would do well to realize the spirit of the teachings of the sages of the Axial Age, 8th to the 6th century B C If all this is not atavism, why should Gandhi's talk of Rama Rajya or Nehru's references to Asoka be taken as Hindu atavistic tendencies ? Everywhere people have conscious or unconscious memories of a Paradise in the Past, of a Golden Age that was, and which could be recreated now After all, even Rousseau and Marx idealized the primitive communism of the "noble savages" and wanted mankind to achieve it again The Age of the Four Caliphs inspires many Muslims in Pakistan[16] Similarly, depending upon personal tastes, the Vedic Age Rama Rajya the Asokan Rule, or the Golden Age of the Guptas inspires many Hindus who idealize one or the other of them and conceive their Utopias in terms of them All this may be atavism or a return to an imagined primordial ideal state of society, but this is not something peculiar to Hindus and India Few men are more conscious of the new world of science and technology and the need to create a New Future than Vivekananda, Nehru and Radhakrishnan

As is to be expected, de Riencourt seizes upon Kautilya and some passages in the *Mahabharata* and generalizes therefrom

No other civilization, he says, advocated such ruthless cynical politics divorced from morality. In India the ruler can keep himself in power only by his cunning and ability. No sanctity is attached to him, and no one's rule is stable. The political world should conform to the natural world, where the law of the jungle only prevails. Nothing is absolutely right, only might is right. Indians left war and politics to the professional soldiers and rulers and were indifferent to them. As politics has nothing to do with morality, Indians, de Riencourt says, do not trust the rulers or the government. Now it is true Kautilya says things which justify some of these remarks, but so do Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, Richlieu, Bismarck, Trietschke, Meinecke and Croce. Depending only on them could Europe be charged with political amoralism? In many passages of the *Mahabharata* a different kind of politics is also advocated; amoral politics, even in the passages where it is expounded, is permitted only as an *apaddharma* in times of crisis. The Dharma Sastras condemn amoral politics, though the Nitisastras countenance it. Kautilya and the Nitisastras are cold, logical, precise, realistic and systematic in their analysis of political realities and prescribing remedies for it. They put *raison d etat* above the kind of morality which religions insist should govern personal relations. Relations between states and actions necessary for keeping oneself in political power cannot be governed by simple categorical universal moral laws. Such is the theory of these books. This is not accepted by other theorists. The Sastras assert that immorality in politics or elsewhere leads to sin and is punishable. Their views too are described in detail in the *Mahabharata*. Asokan edicts are thoroughly ethical. Every Hindu king was subordinate to Dharma and its interpretation by wise Brahmanas. The caste system and the threat of tyrannicide effectively prevented Hindu kings from becoming tyrants or autocrats. Hindu kings, of course, fought internecine battles interminably with each other, as each wanted to, and was exhorted to, become a *cakravartin* and establish a universal

state of perpetual peace But as a result of these wars, only the professional warrior class suffered These wars also weakened it and did not allow it to become autocratic robber barons or war lords as in Europe and China If we compare the political and diplomatic history of European states with that of Indian states in the past or now, India comes off with flying colours In general, Pagan, Muslim and Hindu rulers have stuck to morality and tolerance to a greater extent than European Christian statesmen and rulers

India is ahistoric, *atavistic and politically amoral*—that is de Riencourt's finding India has no unifying principle in its ethos, its people have non unified egos The centrifugal tendencies, the diversity of India, the linguistic problem and the expressed desire for regional autonomy are the expressions of this absence of a unifying principle India's is a split or multiple personality So de Riencourt pronounces As has been shown, India is no more atavistic and religious than Europe, U S A and the Middle East At some times other peoples have been almost obsessed by religious cults and the other world,[1] but India never lost its balance Its desire for *moksa* never swallowed its need for *artha* and *kama* It never forgets the present As I have suggested above and have developed elsewhere[18], political amoralism represents one school of Indian political thought, whereas ethical politics is what is dearer to India and represents its primitive autochthonous spirit It is true there is no monolithic society in India, India is open tolerant, full of diversity and plurality These are all synthesized within an organic unity that dialectically overcomes and transcends them, without abolishing and annihilating them It does not contain the various elements as a heap contains a number of bricks, but as the architectonic of a towering temple fuses into a unity all its diverse components

Only in small compact military states like Sparta and Prussia or in huge totalitarian states like China would rigid uniformity and complete conformity be possible Large demo-

cracies like the U S A and India can never achieve such a unity and uniformity Not to speak of these huge countries, even in fairly big countries like Germany and France, there are differences and occasional tensions between the North and the South and other regions For example, Bavarian regional culture and religious and political outlook differ very much from that of Schleswig-Holstein, or if one drives just 120 miles south west from Hannover, capital of Lower Saxony, one reaches North Rhine-Westphalia with another kind of culture To give another example, Wales is so different from Scotland

ANNEXE

U S A AND INDIA

In the last paragraph, I have said that India is comparable to a vast nation like the U S A, but not to a small *European nation state It seems to be worthwhile to say* something further on this point The Americans are neither a unified historical nation nor a single people for they have diverse racial and national origins with different moral, religious and artistic traits There is a diversity both in geography and culture in the different regions of the U S A, though there is also a national solidarity As in some European nations there is in that country no agreement on any fundamental values, but a respect for and tolerance of cultural plurality To say Americans are committed to justice freedom and peace has no precise meaning, for so are all civilized people the British the French and the Indians In the U S A institutional interests such as those of family, churches labour unions, industries and universities, function autonomously but do not come into conflict with public interests and judgments, because the plurality of such vested interests is recognized and an attempt made to tolerate and coordinate them on the basis of reciprocity and co operation Education is thus liberal and everyone's right, and no attempt is made to indoctrinate or regiment, or put the state above peoples' happiness The

military is subordinated to the civil authority The Americans, have a firm determination to abide by their constitution in which they have a great faith and to live under the law of the land In all this the U S A is strikingly similar to India India is a vast sub-continent of geographical, cultural ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, with a bewildering variety of customs, ideas, values and aspirations But there is also what Nehru called, a 'tremendous impress of oneness', the result of an Indian Vision which haunted the people of this great land throughout the ages This unity cannot be reduced to categorization but can be emotionally experienced by anyone who has soaked himself in its tradition and appropriated it with empathy and has travelled widely across this country It does not consist in a uniformity of customs or of beliefs, and much less in standardizations, but in something deep and indefinable, real but not concrete The American ' system" or ' spirit" is equally elusive but real Both these nations are committed to law and democracy, and to the mutual co operation and tolerance of religious and regional cultural diversities within their larger frameworks Each of them is an international cosmopolitan state Both are pragmatic nations which attach a high value to worldly happiness, material prosperity and utility, and refuse to live for the sake of proving some ideas and detest regimentation of behaviour and thoughts (See for U S A —H W Schneider *A History of American Philosophy*, Forum Books, New York 1957, C A and M R Beard, *The American Spirit* Macmillan New York 1942)

The American political situation is also very similar to the Indian (1) In both the countries the political parties have no ideological or clear cut programmatic commitment, there are only interests but no well-defined principles or policies Of course the Communist Party is an exception, and is strong in India This is a significant difference (2) People in general in the U S A have no deep concern for politics, they are apathetic towards it and consider it to be a sin As Schneider pointed out in one of his papers American Traits and Principles',

the growth of bureaucracy and corruption in America have produced a prejudice against the government Not satisfied with the government some people there think the less government the better it would be In India too similar attitudes and tendencies are present (3) Due to the 'scrambled pattern' of the racial and national origins of the people and the divisive thrusts of classes callings and sectionalism there are many centrifugal forces in the U S A In the 19th century, we may remember, the American Union was challenged by many sections The issues that caused the Civil War still persist as problems Even now on the race and other questions the South and the North differ very much and the Black Muslims (a Negro movement) have begun agitating for a separate state But a common language, common needs, memories and national politics keep in check these divisive forces The shift from sectional to national politics and from loyalties based on national origins ethnology, religion and locale to a loyalty to the American idea, is not complete So is the case in India but as this is a newly independent nation and as there are more acute differences among its many religions regional cultures and languages and as the caste system is not yet dead the centrifugal divisive forces in India are stronger than in the U S A Of course, ours being a parliamentary system of the British type politics here is different from American politics based on a two party system which may enable one of them to dominate the executive while the other dominates the legislative and also makes mutual compromises on foreign policy etc possible (4) Lastly the U S A is not an ideal democracy nor is at all India Both however are by and large doing their best to make themselves so To conclude, the Indian political situation is not bleaker and more hopeless than the American (See C Rossiter *Parties and Politics in America*, Cornell 1960 On the above points relating to America see specially pages 11 24 34 Chap II *passim* and pp 58, 83 and 45)

Morality and law, personal freedom and individual dignity

have a great appeal in both the countries Both seek to transform themselves through democratic processes to establish societies which the political visions of their great men envisaged "The supreme consideration is man", said Gandhi It is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine", he held 'All men are created equal", says the American Declaration of Independence All eyes are opening to the thoughts of man", believed Jefferson, its author The predicament of democracy in the U S A and India is the same, viz., the great distance which still separates the ideal from the present achievement But there are grounds for hope in both the cases and their problems are not dissimilar India of course, has much greater difficulties to surmount because of its vast population, the caste system, lesser national integration, lesser resources and economic under development But what the U S A and Japan could do, it could also accomplish if it gets as much time and equal opportunities though it could not in the forseeable future hope to become as rich and industrial as America Nor is that necessary If India could establish a free and just society and abolish the shocking contrasts of wealth and poverty and extend the minimum benefits of modern civilization to *all* its citizens, it would be fulfilling its destiny

CHAPTER THREE



The Hindu Ethos

Historiography in Hindu Culture

I want to discuss in some detail the so-called historylessness of the Hindus, taking history as an account in some form or other of the past In this connection we have to note that right from the time of the *Satapatha Brahmana* (XIII 4 3), history was put on a par with the sacred scriptures Kautilya had great respect for it and by history he not only meant political history – the rise and fall of dynasties—but also the history of moral theories, law and social institutions The *Ithasa Puranas* are no less historical than the books of the Bible Chronology archaeology and pre-history raise insurmountable doubts and questions regarding Puranic and Biblical accounts Adam Seth Enos and all the others lived each for eight hundred or more years, just as the Puranic kings did ! The quest for the historical Jesus is as fascinating and difficult as the quest for the historical Krsna The histories of Greece and Rome as recounted by the classics teem with fairy-tales and myths Herodotus himself

said the Greeks had a weakness for inventing baseless stories [1] Till late in their history, the Athenians wrote no history, and even Herodotus and Thucydides were naive and uncritical In fact Herodotus as Dilthey suggested, is not a historian, but an epic writer Modern European histories till the early eighteenth century were no better than that of Livy History was conceived till that time as displaying facts and past events for entertainment or edification, and no one bothered about the evidence for them It was thought better to infuse ' beauty, power, precision and brevity ' *into its composition than to stick to* "factual infallibility" History was sought to be made poetic romantic, and hardly less wide of the truth" than the novel Facts were invented, remoulded, and arranged "to fit into a pattern of apparent verisimilitude" [2] If facts—what is and what happened—and exact scrupulous and objective narration of them on the basis of empirical data were always sacred and important to the European mind and to the Hebrew and Christian religions, it is strange that till about 1700 years after Christ these tendencies did not manifest themselves If Europe was so ahistorical till then, and if it could still change its mentality later without changing its religion, surely other nations too could do this

It may be said that Europe always had a few good historians in every age Though this is doubtful, taking it for granted tentatively, one may ask, why did not India have any good histories? It is true that except the Itihasa–Puranas no comprehensive history of the whole of India was composed by any Hindu previous to the European impact on India But were there *good and reliable histories of the whole of Europe—and* not merely of Greece or Rome, Germany or France—till about the eighteenth century? Not to speak of comprehensive histories of Europe or Christendom, were there before modern times critical histories which treated the United Kingdom, the whole of Germany, or Italy as single units? India is a subcontinent with many races, religions, dynasties, and languages Before the modern age it was just impossible for anyone to attempt such a

thing Further, while the cultural unity of India was realized very early, its political unity was realized fully only in recent times But we had from remote times chronicles of kings and dynasties, genealogical lists not only of kings but of ancient families of the upper castes, family records containing minute details of dates and times of births and deaths epigraphic records of events again not only of conquests, but of charities, construction of temples, foundations of colleges and schools etc and bardic literature giving the socio cultural history of tribes, castes and communities Good histories of dynasties *maths* and temples were available which to some extent were also regional histories Besides all this there were biographies of individual kings, religious teachers and movements as well as what may be called accounts of the development of laws institutions and doctrines Of course none of them used the critical and scientific method as it was not yet developed and used in the world But interest in events personalities and doctrines was never lacking in India For a nation which produced astronomers like Aryabhatta, physicians like Caraka and had engineering skill which built the temples of Ellora Konarak and Mahabalipuram, composed the *Brhatkatha* and described *vyavahara* with such minuteness in the smrtis, interest in facts and keeping records of them were neither impossible nor novelties It may interest some to note that temple priests in Puri Srirangam and other places maintain records of the dates of the visits of well to do pilgrims along with their addresses and their offerings and charities in those holy places

Thus in India interest in history was never lacking and there is a good deal of historical literature – cultural social, political and religious as well as literature giving accounts of the past in an incidental way The two best examples of history which the Hindu and the Buddhist minds produced in the past are Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and the *Mahavamsa* which arose in Ceylon out of the Buddhist historical tradition By any criterion these two books can be said to have critical and

objective standards *Mahavamsa* contains a record of 20 centuries of Ceylonese history The *Manjusrimulakalpa* is another historical work which belongs to the Indo Tibetan Buddhist tradition The *Bhagavata*, the *Harivamsa* and the *Mahabharata* provide biographical material for Krsna, so do the *Pitakas* and the other Pali books for the Buddha and the Sangha, whereas the many *Sankara Vijayas* and *Caitanyacaritamrta*, etc , are biographies of great religious teachers They are no doubt not critical and are full of the miraculous but they also show that India cared for what her historical personalities did on earth What Burckhardt said about the Greeks is true about these also The typical or the mythological element in them is a sort of imagined history indicating to us the folk beliefs regarding their capacities and traits That is one kind of history though different from Ranke's "pure history", and it gives more insight than the latter Anyway, "Ahistorical India" is as much a myth as ahistorical Greece

The point I wish to make is that it is not factually correct to say as for example Lowes Dickinson said, "that there are no Hindu historians" [3] It is however true that there were no comprehensive critical and scientific histories of the whole of India written by the Hindus before the modern period So some conclude there was no Hindu history Starting from this wrong assumption, Lowes Dickinson goes on to find the cause for it in Indian climate and geography Nature he says overwhelms and dominates man in India making him feel he is nothing and that life is insignificant The world is experienced as a night mare and there cannot be the history of a nightmare he argues It is true climate and food can invigorate or enervate and enfeeble people, as Montesquieu clearly noted long ago [3a] but it is unjustified to put too exclusive an emphasis on environment and food as the bases of personality And surely there can be a nightmarish history of a nightmare ! Anyway facts go against Lowes Dickenson Indian thought considered human life as a supreme value and a great opportunity It is one of the most

significant phenomena in the cosmos There is no passage in any of the Hindu classics which dismisses human life and what we do and think in this world as unimportant Know the truth here and now *(il a cana ve litha)* otherwise it would be a great loss to you perform dharma now live the good life and waste not your opportunity that is the Hindu message No Hindu scripture teaches that we are born in vain and that life has no mean ng — Fa l ... the world and life

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ideas and attitudes found congenial habitations in Greece, Germany Spain, Turkey, Iran Mesopotamia and Egypt in different times, cultures and religions, just as they did in the writings of Gaudapada and Sankara It is arbitrary to say that such attitudes and theories belong to the Hindus or the Buddhists only in any special way The Sautrantikas and the Vaibhasikas, and the Theravada are not in any way less Buddhistic than Vijnanavada and Sunyavada and the Mahayana, and the Advaita Vedanta and Yoga are not more authentically Hindu than Nyaya-Vaisesika and Mimamsa A study of Indian history and literature shows no people were more practical and this worldly than the Hindus, the fascination they had for material prosperity and power and the delight they took in sense experience were unsurpassed Good food (*panca bhaksya, sadrasa*), gold and diamonds silks and scents *aisvarya* and *vaibhava* power and glory, are themes which are recurrent in Indian secular and religious art and literature What the Hindu generally does not care for is the immediately useless and the ideal Activities like mountain-climbing hopeless romantic love which does not culminate in fruition, meticulous detailed studies of foreign languages and cultures for their own sake, pure mathematics, theoretical physics etc, – these do not very much attract him On the other hand, he takes to descriptive and classificatory science medicine, technology and engineering as a duck takes to water To give just two illustrations there are chairs for Indology and Sanskrit in most European Universities, European scholars spend so much energy, time and money to study Indian history, religion and culture, but in India there are no chairs for Greek or Latin or for Sinology or Egyptology, and Indians do not go to Europe and the Middle East to study and investigate Christianity, Islam and European and Islamic cultures, in short we have no Occidentalists Similarly we have no Indian explorers of the Arctic regions or the African jungles, nor Indian travellers who travelled for mere pleasure or for just studying foreign manners and customs The Hindu is generally averse to

pioneering beyond any frontiers—geographic, scientific, literary or artistic But hundreds of Indians go to the West to study the useful arts and sciences that pay So Indian psychology has nothing to do with indifference to facts and historylessness Once the Indian mind was convinced that history as understood in the modern West was a worthwhile pursuit, it proved itself capable of mastering historiography Sir R G Bhandarkar, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, P V Kane, Rahul Sankrityayan, R C Majumdar and K A Nilakanta Sastri and a host of others stand witnesses to this

It was not the historical outlook which produced a new mentality in Europe in the modern period As already pointed out the Greek attitude to history was not dissimilar to that of some Indian metaphysicians Platonic-Aristotelian tradition did not think much of history, which gives only 'knowledge' about the particular and the ephemeral which, according to Plato, is not really knowledge but only belief Law and administration were the Roman forte, not history The Hebrew conception of history did not reach any higher level than that of the Hindus History has a purpose, but that is only known to God who makes and unmakes nations and kingdoms to fulfil divine justice But God, it was believed, is specially concerned with the Hebrew nation as a whole and its destiny and other nations or even the individuals of the Hebrew nation in themselves do not have much significance Life on earth is the only reality the world finally ends, there are no souls and the dead go to Sheol a deep pit beneath the ground, where they are virtually annihilated Thus Yahwism was an ethnic and not a personal faith, which really had no profound and elaborate conception of universal history Gradually by its own logic and under Greek influences, it came to accept personal immortality final judgement and a universal outlook Later as one of the greatest contemporary thinkers said, Christianity replaced the drama of earthly life by a supernatural drama" and ' deprived human history of its autonomy and value '[56]

The modern European idea of "progress" understood in the sense that we would endlessly advance more and more in all spheres and that we should not be content with what we are and have, that stability and order are not the highest values, developed out of the disparagement of history The European modern mind developed by dethroning the past, giving it up as irrelevant, and focussing attention on the present alone and what the future promises What does it matter what people thought or did in the past? What is wanted is knowledge of the contemporary world in which one lives, and how one can order his affairs better and better How does the history of the Roman empire benefit one more than the history of the Turks or the Siamese? What does it matter to us what the Greeks did or thought? We have to think for ourselves and live our own lives Either our own reason, or the holy scripture alone can tell us what the right kind of life is History is useless for that, nor can it like science give us power or happiness Moreover, there is no accurate ancient or modern history, all historians are "charlatans" Such was the European attitude to history in the early eighteenth century[6] which helped the emergence of the new mentality and "progress" Rationalism as well as Illuminism did not care for history Descartes Spinoza Fontenelle, Pufendorf – none of these and other great men who helped to create the modern mind cared very much for history

ii

THE HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Usually it is said the Hindus have no philosophy of history because for them all happenings are illusion This cannot apply to any Hindu who is not a *mayavadi* in a certain sense, and such persons have been always few Hindu theism believes God is active in history, he makes history and guides

it He has a plan for the world but it is not to fulfil his needs or purposes for he is perfect and eternal It is for us he is active the welfare of the world *lokasangraha* is what prompts him Vaisnavism and Buddhism introduce an additional factor The incarnations (*avataras*) of Visnu in the previous ages and his doings on earth the promise that he will reincarnate again whenever it is necessary to firmly establish dharma and the Puranic faith that the last of the ten great avataras is to come in the future invest history with a purpose Similarly Buddhism has the twenty four Buddhas who flourished in the past ages and the great future Buddha to come Maitreya not to speak of Sakya Gautama whose history is recorded in such detail in the Pitakas There is a certain apocalyptic element also in this faith

Ages come and go epochs occur repeatedly The good and the bad ages the ages of dynamism and greatness of sloth and decadence of freedom and tyranny and of righteousness and unrighteousness of varying degrees cyclically succeed each other People s actions and mentalities fashion the ages they live in and in turn the ages mould the people and at important junctures in history when the moral need is felt and when the social and political situation demands there are born the makers of epochs men who give a new turn to history and help to usher in a new age These are men of transcendental ability who by their liberating deeds inaugurate great ages of progress Such are either the *vibhutis* or the *avataras* of God They are recognised by the support they give to moral forces and good men and the vigour with which they fight against unrighteousness and evil men There are however in each age lesser men who though they may not be able to greatly influence it or change it try to walk in the path of virtue to the best *of their ability and set an* example to others Even in a very wicked age one can lead a good life there have been many saints in *Kaliyuga* and in the best age also one can go astray

and lead an evil life, innumerable demoniac persons were not lacking in the *Krtayuga* Ages of enlightenment and righteousness are *krtayugas* of ignorance and evil *Kaliyugas*, and in between come ages which are not so clear-cut In the best ages material prosperity, liberty and spirituality go together Idleness, poverty, wars, superstition, irreligion, oppression and cruelty are the marks of Kaliyugas

No age lasts for ever, each comes lasts for a while and goes Men's actions and thoughts God's will and his *avataras* and *vibhutis* these determine the nature of an age Thus within what is supposed to be the *Tretayuga* occurred the great phenomenon -- Ramarajya, the rule of Rama, and within what is usually supposed to be the Kaliyuga, the era of Vikramaditya was considered to be the *Krtayuga* for a long time They must have been great epochs of peace and prosperity, of heroism and noble deeds and of faith and goodwill The interregnums of Vena's rule and of Hiranya Kasipu, etc, fell in the so-called Krtayuga So it is the people of an age who can make it a golden age or an iron age, but it is not wholly dependent on them Their ancestral achievements, heritage (this is Karma) and their own present actions (this is *purusartha*), their equipment, resources and circumstances – (this is Fate *Vidhatr*) and above all God's will, – all these together determine history If all these join together, a good age may be succeeded by a better age, or a bad age may become worse There is no necessary chronological sequence that things must invariably go from good to bad from bad to worse and so on to the worst and restart all over then A *Krtayuga* may be made to dawn at any time if Karma, Vidhatr and God's will are favourable No people will always continue to be uninterruptedly in an age of peace, freedom and plenty, or in an age of evil, unrest tyranny and poverty Their own Karma and Vidhatr do not allow that But no age can really be past redemption, for whenever necessary the Saviour will come Every history is made up of ups and downs, of

good and bad periods, succeeding each other, even as an individual life alternately rotates between sleep and wakefulness[7] (*Aitareya*, XXX, 3)

To sum up, through ages of struggle and effort man comes to inaugurate a *Krtayuga*, but this does not last for ever, because men are not angels and earth is not heaven, tensions and passions develop and break up this millennium, but again man through toil and endeavour seeks to reestablish another *Krtayuga*, which disintegrates again and the cycle restarts Human history is a continuous effort to establish the krtayuga, the Ramarajya, the kingdom of heaven on earth, but this never completely succeeds, and the partial successes achieved are overturned and followed by repeated failures and successes Ages of harmony, hope, freedom and justice and ages of discord, futility, oppression and evil alternate following each other, or sometimes a good age may be followed by a better age and this by an yet better one, but this progress because of human nature will not be always in a straight line Men's actions and God's will make and unmake them All this happens to provide opportunities to the souls to liberate themselves and achieve union with the Divine

Now I come to non-theistic Vedanta According to Sankara history is not meaningless but what happens is not as real as the eternal immutable Brahman The world is non-different (*ananya*) from Brahman and is in a sense a revelation of it The world is a progressive manifestation of the one spirit realizing itself gradually in ever ascending degrees of being, knowledge and bliss from the level of matter through that of plant and animal life to that of mankind, finally reaching its acme in the men who have realized their identity with Brahman[8] Brahman realization is the goal of history, the liberation of all (*sarvamukti*) is the consummation towards which history is advancing History the process of realization, the means of Brahman-experience is not as real and as important as the realization itself, but it precedes this great reality and

because of it there arises the need for realizing this and the consequent spiritual effort History pales into insignificance and may well vanish when it is consummated, but till then it is meaningful and real It is only the reality of the Eternal End and its being the highest value that make the Means look relatively insignificant and trivial Which saint in any religion ever considered the world and history—the doings of men and the rise and fall of nations—to be as absolutely real and as fully meaningful as God and spiritual life?

iii

INTERPRETATIONS OF INDIAN HISTORY

Imperialists Missionaries and Marxists did not find Indian history to be meaningful In this section I propose to discuss them

A Dictated by cultural chauvinism imperialistic historians found no sense in the history of barbarian India' till the West conquered it The one significant event that occurred to India was according to them its coming under the tutelege of the West Barbarians with a slavish mentality who do not know the values of morality and truth split up into a myriad petty despotic states ever warring with each other, a chaotic society repeatedly falling prey to foreign invasions —that was Indian history before it was conquered by the West according to imperialist historians like James Mill Elphinstone and Vincent Smith Whatever good there was in Indian thinking and institutions was many of them said, borrowed from the Greeks the Iranians the Assyrians and the Babylonians Britain was destined to teach India civilization and morals confer happiness upon it, and lead it into the modern age, and save it from superstition and anarchy —so believed men like Sir A Lyall, Sir W W Hunter, Sir J F Stephen J Talboys Wheeler and a host of other British civilians and historians Some Hindu historians

who went to school under the British imbibed the myth of Aryan superiority and Dravidian barbarism and used to teach that Aryan conquerors brought civilization and higher religion to India This was the sort of history I used to read in my school days They forget that Krsna and Veda Vyasa, the two greatest teachers of Hinduism were not Aryans Some Muslim historians do not hesitate to say that Islam conquered and civilized India (Shibli Nomani), that the Ghorid invasion and Khalji Sultanate revolutionized Indian Society gave an all-India justice for the first time and emancipated the lower castes from the oppression of the higher castes (Muhammad Habib) and that Muslim treatment of non Muslims was better than the Aryan treatment of non Aryans, while the condition of the subjugated and the lowest castes under Muslim rule was the best they ever had (I H Qureshi, Z Faruki, S M Jaffar) [9]

Historical and archaeological researches, especially the discoveries of Mohenjodaro and Harappa the coming to light of the history of South India, and the translations and critical studies of literary and epigraphical evidence have to a great extent demolished some of these myths Value judgments such as 'the Aryans civilized India' the Muslims civilized India , or, 'the British brought civilization to India' are more capable of refutation than of proof Indian cultural development cannot be identified exclusively with Aryanization the Islamic impact, or Westernization There are now no historians who believe they are the descendants of the Sakas, the Hunas and others and heirs to their cultures Otherwise the benefits of their invasions would also have been lauded! There are again Hindu historians who are proud of what they call the Indian 'Colonization of South East Asian Countries and how it conferred nothing but good upon those peoples while they almost deny any benefit that Muslim and British rules conferred upon India That all these conquests did produce some good and much evil cannot be denied The Iranians who invaded Greece, the Northern peoples before whom Rome fell and the

Mongols, Arabs and Turks who conquered parts of Europe and ruled over them—did they not also contribute something good to Europe? France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Eastern Europe—these countries also when they now and then conquered and ruled over each other for some time must have conferred benefits on each other From that line of reasoning China is civilizing and modernizing Tibet and conferring benefits on it! And it would do so for India if given a chance!!

Only when religions and cultures spread without political prestige and military power backing them could they confer the maximum possible benefits on the people who adopt them The expansion of Greek culture which lead to the European Renaissance, the spread of the saviour-religions—Mithraism and Christianity – in the Roman Empire before Constantine, and of Buddhism in China and Japan were of this kind Such also was the case of the adoption of proto Hinduism by the Aryans, the diffusion of Vaisnavism among the Indo Greeks, and the adoption of Vaisnavism and Saivism by some conquering tribes who came to India In these cases it was the intrinsic appeal of those cultures or religions which captivated their converts On the other hand, all conquests and aggression—whether political, religious, or cultural—contribute something good in course of time, if they are allowed to consolidate themselves, but the amount of evil they generate and the havoc they cause can never be counterbalanced by that benefit The castes " those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power", as Marx called them[10], are the results of the disastrous Aryan invasion of India the contemporary Muslim problem the outcome of the Turco Afghan and Mughal invasions whereas much of the debility, passivity, poverty and lack of a common national will in modern India owe their growth to British imperialism Yet, it is true all these peoples the Aryans, the Muslims and the British made magnificent contributions and the two former have become part and parcel of India It is due to them that this country is what it is Above all all the conquerors of India who

and political It repelled some as in the ages of the Mauryans the Salivahanas the Guptas, Yasodharman Visnuvardhana and much later in Rajasthan and Gujarat when the armies of the great Khalifs tried to penetrate into India The Sakas the Hunas and others who overthrew empires elsewhere were successfully resisted Those whom India could not repel it totally assimilated, if possible or at least Indianized Indian Muslim culture for example differs a good deal from Muslim culture in West Asia In the case of the British only it could not succeed in these ways After unsuccessful resistance in the beginning—e g by the Sikhs, the Maharashtras Haider and Tippu—it resorted to a revolt which was quelled and was followed by a period of political prostration and yet this Indian 'submission even is as Marx said counterbalanced by a certain calm nobility'[13] During that period cultural and religious resistance made Western missionary efforts a failure on any large scale Then again political resistance of various types followed till freedom came The history of India is in a way an account of its efforts to preserve its culture and freedom unimpaired and when possible to spread its influence across its borders Indian commerce trade and civilization spread themselves far and wide India did not also hesitate to colonize and conquer when opportunities presented To sum up India is just like any other country it conquered and was as well conquered in turn It has always been a live human nation just like any other nation and was not more peace loving and spiritual than others There was and is no divine *sakti* in it any more than in Germany and Russia or in Israel and China Divine *sakti* is omnipresent knowing no geographical frontiers or national divisions On the other hand the plight of India at some periods was not more woe begone than that of other nations at some periods

B It was the Christian missionaries who first put forward the idea that the cause of all the degeneracy immorality and abominations which they thought they found in India was Hinduism Christianization being its only remedy This is too

foolish and provincial a view to be even considered It would be like saying that all the evils existing in Europe and America in the Middle Ages and now are the results of Christianity If there is no causal relation between them and Christianity, why is it said by some that Hinduism is responsible for all the evils in India? *Sati* and child-marriages are no more Hinduism than the Inquisition and feudalism are Christianity, and caste has nothing to do with real Hinduism just as racism has nothing to do with either Christianity or Communism It is amazing that this identification of Hinduism with a decadent social organization—caste—still goes on and men like Koestler state that India cannot become a working democracy unless a revolution occurs which strikes at the very roots of Hindu society and Hindu tradition"[14] A leading anthropologist like Haimendorf does not hesitate to quote such a statement with approval [15] India is far from being an ideal democracy, much in its society must change for the better, many of the beliefs and practices in vogue should also go But to call them Hindu" shows a religious prejudice Since the ideal society has not been established even in the West, the West should also give up many of its existing ways of thinking and doing things but some of us who have much better knowledge of Christianity than Koestler has of Hinduism would hesitate to call the evils in Europe Christian"

Capitalism and colonialism are not Christian, there have been great Jewish, Jaina and Parsee capitalists, and the Hindus had been invaders and colonizers" at some periods in history as well as world traders and entrepreneurs Identification of any great religion with a particular type of social or political organization race, or modes of production is based upon a misunderstanding of the essence of that religion Religions originate in particular societies and countries, are influenced by them in their development, but all great religions outgrow them, spread to other countries and mould different types of societies at various times and are themselves transformed to some extent by them In all this what is of perennial value in them gets more and

more clarified although no creed ever can sum up this essence finally and adequately Hence the need for doctrinal development creedal reformulations fresh theological discussions and debates The less spiritual a religion the more tied up would it be with a particular type of society only Hinduism like other great religions has proved to be suitable to every type of social and political organization down the centuries It influenced diverse types of organization, inspired contradictory theories and systems, and itself was shaped in its expressions at some periods by them, but it has essentially nothing to do with them It transcends them So do Christianity Judaism Islam and Buddhism The Divine Right theory of kings and Feudalism, Socialism and Democracy, Franco and Kennedy, all these claim to be Christian Society in the time of Moses was very much different from what it is now in Ben Gurion's time, but the profound insights of the prophets of Israel continue to be inspiring and relevant The Islamic message gave people of the Caliphate a faith by which and for which they lived, as it does today to Nasser and Zakir Hussain and their peoples For democracy to be vindicated it is not necessary that the heritage of Krsna the Buddha and Mahavira should be uprooted What is necessary in all these cases is to separate the essence from the accidentals, the eternal from the ephemeral This is a continuous task and in Hinduism in modern times from Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhi and Radhakrishnan, this is being attempted by many in different ways successfully The connected problem of the plurality of religions each claiming to be absolute, all sufficient and final, is one which I tried to tackle elsewhere and propose to come back to again in future

The valid and relevant contrast is not between the Christian West and Hindu India, but between industrialized nations making more and more advances in technology and agrarian societies not yet industrially developed, between nations with limited populations and relatively plentiful resources developed by colonization manufacturing techniques and scientific

agriculture and nations with vast and continuously growing populations handicapped by inadequate resources, and pre-modern manufacturing and agricultural techniques, and between nations which enjoy an invigorating climate and those which are the victims to some extent of a debilitating climate and food which produce languor and fatigue too easily The issue is not between morality and immorality, or barbarism *versus* civilization At certain times some nations come to possess vitality to a degree greater than others Vitality is not culture or morality, but a sort of eruptive power and impetuous vigour endowed with a requisite will and a shrewdness indifferent to other peoples' lives and happiness, which seeks to gratify itself in aggressive violence, mastery and overpowering of others, or in a frenzied restless industry It is this which makes certain individuals or nations dominate, conquer and rule over others, and then fade away Vitality, fortunately, is an ephemeral phase Mesopotamia, the Roman Empire, the British Empire, the Sri Vijaya Empire—they are all gone It is ethically false and factually unproven to think that might is right, that whichever is the conquering or ruling nation is the more civilized and morally advanced nation The Goths, Vandals, and the Huns who overran the Roman Empire were not more civilized than the conquered Babylonian morals and religion were not more elevated than those of Judea, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were not more cultured and holy than Daniel and his people Turkey and Germany were not more civilized than Greece, Belgium and Czechoslovakia, and Russia and China more than the Baltics, Hungary and Tibet The Cholas of India who conquered Indonesia and Ceylon and ruled them for decades were morally and culturally not greater than other invaders Why does all this happen? The best but not a satisfactory answer was given long ago The Lord—wisdom and fortitude are his And he changeth times and ages taketh away kingdoms and establisheth them But before he does this, he weighs them in the balance There we have divine

iv

'Progress' and Hindu Culture

From the time of Sir Henry Maine or even earlier a number of Western writers have said that India lacks the "principle of progress"[23]. It has (they say) no perspective for the future, no blueprint of an ideal society to be built and no definite plans to work for it "Europe's futuristic instinct", says Ortega Y Gasset, "stands in marked contrast to the irremediable traditionalism of the Orient"[24] Some like Maine think "progress" is a continuous production of new ideas, which was a "peculiar distinction" of the Greeks, from whom it spread to other Europeans, and from whom it can be communicated to others No one who can at least glance through Das Gupta's massive volumes on Indian philosophy and the volumes on Indian history sponsored by K M Munshi, Fung Yu Lan's two volumes on Chinese philosophy and Needham's volumes on Chinese science, philosophy and religion, and has some idea of Muslim achievements, can grant this "peculiar distinction" to the Greeks This is not to deny the greatness of the Greeks, but also to accept the greatness of the Indians, the Chinese and the Arabs If the Greeks had this unique and priceless possession of "progress", is it not surprising that their civilization was less enduring than that of others? And, was theirs greater in achievement than that of others in the Orient and the Occident?

Others have attributed the remarkable development of Europe to Christianity and the "stagnation" of India and China to heathenism These people have no answers to such questions Why did this "progress" appear only about 1800 years after Europe accepted Christianity? Why were some Eastern countries more prosperous and advanced than Europe till about the 18th century? Not to speak of the Greeks and the Romans who considered the splendour and prosperity of

India as marvellous, the travel accounts of the Europeans who came to India in Mughal times, in the days of Vijayanagar and at other periods in the Christian era are nearly unanimous that India was then as prosperous as Europe. On the other hand, some accounts vouch it was more prosperous. The wealth of Ormuz or Ind, the treasures, diamonds and muslins of Audh, Golconda and Dacca became legends in Europe. It was Indian gold which became the capital for the industrialization of England. The economic differences between the prince and the peasant in India were not greater than in Europe, nor the lower castes much worse off than the serfs. Security, law and order anywhere in India were not lower than in medieval Europe, and in the Southern Kingdoms of the Cholas, the Chalukyas, the Pandyas, and in the Kingdom of Vijayanagar etc., they were far higher. The Arab world in the Middle ages, especially in the 11th and 12th centuries, was richer than the West, and more advanced in culture, science, mathematics, medicine, engineering, and educational and military organization. Superstition and priestly domination were then far less in the Arab world than in Europe. According to Humboldt, the Arabs were the founders of modern experimental science. Much was learnt by Christian Europe from the Muslim East when the former came into contact with the latter during the crusades and subsequently. European progress owes a good deal to this experience.

Some writers have tried to find in Protestantism the cause for European progress, but history does not bear this out. Luther's movement even at its best can in no way be regarded as modern in spirit as compared to Catholicism at its best. Renaissance Rome was much more worldly, liberal and capitalistic; it encouraged science and learning much more than Lutheranism The Reformation was against the corruptions in the Church and against the monopolies, cartels, and usury practices of the capitalists like the Medici and the Fuggers, who introduced into the economic sphere the kind of morality

advocated by Machiavellian politics While the Reformation was not an ally of science and enlightenment, of high finance and commerce, it was not a supporter of the poor and the downtrodden also Its attitude towards culture, wealth and power was "medieval" and "monkish" (in the bad sense) Luther, and Melanchthon too, rated a peasant's life higher than that of a merchant's Contacts with the Arabs the secularization of political theory beginning with Machiavelli, the growth of nation states, the discovery of Greek manuscripts, humanism, the birth of the economic mind in cities like Florence Venice and Flanders, the discovery of new countries with different cultures and religions the emergence of capitalism (e g Fuggers) and commerce, the Copernican revolution, – it was these forces which burst within the Medieval world that disintegrated it and ushered in the Modern World, which was later shaped by Bacon, Hobbes, Galileo, Descartes and others All this was not inspired either by Catholicism or Protestantism In fact both the Churches fought to the best of their abilities against experimental science rationalism, humanism, and the new economic spirit, and were defeated

It was not religion, but, as Brooks Adams showed scepticism and commerce that led to modern Western dominance [5] Moral unscrupulousness coupled with indifference to religion was one of the main factors that contributed to Western supremacy Single-minded insatiable pursuit of wealth and power was the main driving force and essence of European capitalism and colonialism Adams, Tawney Keynes and other authorities are unanimous that the ideology which gave birth to this aggressive spirit was irreligious As Tawney said, except by a metaphor this cannot be described as Christian [6]

The Counter-Reformation by stopping the spread of this *inquisitive acquisitive and sceptical spirit did not allow the* Catholic countries to share in this new mood for about two centuries In France though it was Catholic, the State was

amazing growth of capitalism and colonialism that were responsible for European dominance This is not the place to discuss whether this new spirit is really Christian or not [29] Some great Protestant historians and theologians and the Catholics think it is a perversion of Christianity some believe it is not even completely loyal to Calvin and true Puritanism If it is Christian it has surely taken centuries for Europe to discover this for no Christian prior to the sixteenth century advocated such an ideal (But many practised it) *Visio Dei* contemplation faith and worship were the recognized ideals till then Anyway political expediency deriving from Machiavelli and social expediency said to be the offspring of Puritanism along with vitality and the changed material circumstances led to European hegemony in the modern world [30]

If progress be equated with capitalism (as defined by Weber see below) and colonialism Hinduism lacks this principle Hinduism does not teach that its followers should conquer the whole world through wars commerce or proselytization or that they should worship Mammon as their Deity If however progress means discovering new ways of thinking and doing things and a concern to lead better and happier lives Hinduism is all for it

The concept of progress is now generally considered to be based upon three beliefs (a) There is a meaning and direction in history (b) It is by empirical experience that we can understand facts for the universe is governed by a discoverable or intelligible law and not by an arbitrary providence (c) Happiness and prosperity in this world are important From what has been said in this paper it should be clear that Hinduism endorses all these three points The scriptures of no other religion are more this worldly in their outlook than the Hindu and no culture gives greater prominence than the Hindu *to pleasures of this world and empirical experience as the basis* of knowledge These facts are evident to anyone who takes the *sastraic* corpus as a whole along with folklore literature

art and actual Indian history By taking only isolated passages and the utterances of some monks or mystics – ancient and modern – we cannot make any proper generalizations European ethos cannot be fully understood by an exclusive study of the Gospels, St Benedict's Rule, or St Francis' 'Little Flowers' nor Islamic culture by a mere concentrated study of Al Ghazzali Rumi and the lives of the Dervishes

In the West there appear to be two attitudes towards progress [8] *Some think it means the destruction of one type of* society and the substitution in its place of another entirely different Progress is thus a vertical movement, and is achieved suddenly and drastically everytime there is an increase in rational knowledge or means of production There is no continuity, no gradual transition, from the old world to the new Institutions have to be fundamentally changed from time to time by political action This is what the Encyclopaedists and to some extent the Marxists think about progress, but the latter envisage a stage where *the* perfect society would be established *on earth* after which *nothing further needs to* be done The latter is a vestige of the influence of the idea of the kingdom of heaven on earth understood in one way There is a different concept of progress prevalent in England and the U S A According to this progress consists in maintaining the status quo by educating all people to know truth so that existing institutions may be purified Progress on this view is a horizontal movement a continuous gradual increase of the benefits (e g freedom prosperity) already being enjoyed and their extension to as many people as possible Progress is not an annihilation of the existing society and its substitution by another it is not achieved by revolution but by developing more and more stability by individuals getting more and more education reforming themselves and realizing their responsibilities All evil in society is due to evil men and not to institutions If more and more people come to know truth and the moral law and behave better and better there will be more and

more progress

This Anglo American idea of progress is closer to the Indian concept, but the difference is that Indians do not think that progress will always be a straight line development Except for a brief period when European power remained paramount in the world, and when Europeans developed a smug complacency and parochialism, some of the best European minds were never naive enough to believe in such a straight-line development Vico Croce, Burchardt, Toynbee Spengler Brooks Adams, Jaspers and a number of others in every century had better ideas of history than is represented by that stereotype If progress means more and more scientific knowledge and technology, unless a nuclear war destroys the existing civilization, that seems to be assured (Chinese Communists however, think otherwise about a nuclear war) But if progress means a better and better type of society with freedom, justice equality prosperity and happiness extending to more and more human beings all over the world in an uninterrupted ever widening movement the two world wars the cold war the totalitarianisms and the dictatorships of this century have disproved its existence Civilization can relapse into barbarism or can be taken to a higher level Both are equally possible

Lastly there is no unanimity that the idea of progress is the chief motivating force for progress the idea may be the result of reflection on actual progress achieved due to various causes Progress may be prior to a clearly formulated idea of it absence of such an idea does not impede progress Similarly, it has not been demonstrated by anyone that there is a functional relation between religions and types of societies (e g capitalistic socialistic etc) * though it is clear they do influence each other Anyway there is nothing in Hinduism which impedes progress democracy science and material prosperity on the contrary Hindu culture is more favourable to them than some others The causes for Indian poverty and underdevelopment are not Hinduism Buddhism and Jainism

V

The Hindu Attitude to Money and Work

Hinduism does not disparage money and the hard work necessary for it. Innumerable *nitisatakas*, folklore, the *Itihasa Puranas* and the *smrtis* urge man to work hard and become prosperous. In more than one dialogue in the *Mahabharata*, Yudhistira's younger brothers praise *artha* to the skies. Without money, morality and pleasure are impossible. Money is the source of dharma (*Dhanaddhi dharmo nisrauti*, *Santi*, ch. 8.) Sri, wealth or prosperity, is divine whereas poverty is despicable. In fact, poverty is called a sin (*Daridryam patakam loke*). Sri depends on adventure, effort and industry, on cleanliness and purity. The lazy man and the poor beggar are not objects of either praise or compassion in Hindu culture.[31] In fact classical literature knows no professional beggars. The *bhiksu* or the *sannyasin* is one who has voluntarily renounced the world, is engaged in spiritual effort and is working for the welfare of the world. The true Brahmana is one who is a whole-time devotee of spiritual study, meditation and teaching; he is the thinker, the path finder and path indicator of righteousness and salvation. Such people and the brahmacarins only have a right to beg. But they are advised to resort to it only when strictly necessary. The poor who do not come under the above categories ought not to beg; they ought to work. There is not a single *smrti* text which exhorts one to give alms to the poor as such; charity (*dana*) ought to be extended to only one class – the learned and good Brahmanas who are fully engaged only in study and teaching regarding dharma and Brahman. *Danadharmam niseveta patramasadya saktitah*.[32] In the ideal Hindu scheme idlers and beggars have no place.[33] It is the duty of the poor to uplift themselves and become prosperous by their own adventurous spirit, courage and efforts – *udyama sahasa yatna*.[34] Others can help them if they want and that is a highly

gain (Max Weber)[39] (See however note 30) Hinduism does not disparage money and economic power but is averse to take it as the supreme end Economic ends must always be achieved not only lawfully but morally Money is *a* great good and *a* supreme value without it nothing else can be done no good quality of one would be efficacious if one is poor The poor are neither respected nor do they have self respect Hinduism admits all this but does not agree that money should be the ultimate end Money or wealth has only three courses charity enjoyment or destruction *Danam bhogo nasah tisro gatayo bhavanti vittasya* as Bhartrhari said If a wealthy man does not utilize what he has in charity or in enjoyment his possessions go in vain *Dana* (charity) said Sankara is properly sharing with others what one has[3a] To impoverish oneself through charity is a glorious thing. *Sobhante galita vibhavah ca arthisu narah* Bhartrhari To make gifts to learned Brahmanas especially the knowers of Brahman to feed the brahmacarins sannyasins and *atidhis* to help the distressed and the needy to build and endow temples schools and hospitals to do things helpful to all beings such as the digging of wells and tanks the laying of roads and planting of trees —all these are comprised by charity To spend all one has for such purposes after fulfilling one s obligations is the noblest thing to do [40] the next best thing is to enjoy morally what one has Of course that money should also be utilized for the welfare of one s family relatives and friends is a cardinal duty To help others denying one s own dependants is a crime [41]

Accumulation of money without limit and continuous insatiable efforts to multiply it this is avarice *(lobha)* the most despicable thing according to Hindu ethics There must be voluntary limits to one s ambitions at some stage or other contentment with what one has ought to be achieved There after one should while spending it wisely think more of other things A feverish non stop pursuit of money for its own sake is an immoral as well as a mad thing to do If however one

wants to acquire money purely for the sake of Dharma—for spending it for public welfare—there need not be an end to such activity though it is better that too is at some stage or other abandoned to leave time for contemplation A fetish should not be made of work and earning they should have a meaning beyond themselves Man should not lapse into the condition of a slave or a mule freedom from drudgery and devotion to other values are also important Among these latter is a civilized life of enjoyment of gratification of the senses within the limits prescribed by one s means desires abilities health and the moral law The man who has natural desires and can afford but still does not enjoy is a mean fellow It is rational to enjoy comforts or luxuries according to one s economic resources and not to accumulate money and lead a frugal and austere life No Hindu classical text folklore or mores holds up as an ideal a rich man who leads a frugal self denying life to multiply his wealth High living and high thinking are the best of combinations if possible The Hindu gods princes merchants and great *grhasta* Brahmanas *(maha salas)* revelled in comforts and luxuries It may be added that if one has no desire and taste for pleasures all the surplus wealth should be devoted to charity and not as productive capital

A householder s life is for earning and enjoying morally [4] Devote yourself to earning as if you are never going to die and spend what you earn as if you are going to die immediately—so says a famous popular text Acquire money by all legitimate means but do not covet it for itself do not develop avarice spend it away freely for the good of others and for your own civilized *(nagarika)* life Also have a limit to your economic pursuit draw a line somewhere and develop contentment there after and free yourself for devoting yourself to the pursuit of the highest end contemplation That is the Hindu ideal

The modern Western man gripped by the acquisitive spirit may not understand it but I think a classical Greek a Roman of the Augustan Age or a Medieval Christian a Muslim of

poetry, Radhakrishnan's view of life and Aurobindo's exposition of Indian culture

It is time now to draw up the threads of this discussion The Hindu was never averse to progress, material prosperity and wealth (*vrddhana, abhyudaya, sri, artha*) There is no glorification of poverty in the Hindu classics, no odes are sung in honour of Lady Poverty by Hindu poets The idea that the poor are in any special way dear to God and that the rich cannot enter the kingdom of heaven is foreign to Hinduism Frugal living and simplicity when the means permit is not held up as an ideal by Hindu ethics It is the duty of men to work hard, struggle and prosper, Hindu ethics only enjoins that when as much prosperity as desired is not achieved, frustration and despondency should be avoided and efforts should be redoubled Man in all circumstances should learn to develop serenity, inner calm and poise He is the maker of his destiny, by *purusartha* much can be attained here, much that was done in the past lives can be undone and a foundation for better lives in future can also be laid Only the impotent rely on fate (*Paurusam hi param manye, daivam niscitya muhyate Daivam klibah upasate Santiparva*, Madras Edition, p 267 & 715)[43] Yet, if, in spite of all this, it is found that a man does not enjoy here happiness in proportion to his virtue, abilities and efforts, it is explainable as due to his past Karma The Karma theory which arose to explain evil in this world tries to make the world intelligible as a cosmos in which both the natural and the moral laws prevail It does not teach passivity or resignation to fate

Having said this, it must be added that Hinduism does not believe that man is born only to toil He is not a beast of burden To work and to enjoy—both are in order Economic prosperity should not be *the* only end of man Money is only a means to practice dharma and enjoy life No one has the right to make as much profit as his ingenuity and cunning would allow Commerce should be controlled and it must be made to contribute to the social good Anyone who accumulates too

much money but does not use it for charity has no right to that money Such a person's wealth can be seized and confiscated by the society or government and utilized for public good Passages in the *smrtis*[44] and *arthasastras* suggest this It is the duty of the state to see that no one leads an idle parasitic existence, strict control over those who claim to be *bhiksus* and *sannyasins* should be kept and when they are found to be having no vocation for such a life they must be punished It is also the duty of the state to see everyone has an opportunity to work When there is unemployment, vast public works projects should be undertaken to create employment It is also a governmental duty to see that famines do not occur, and if they occur the misery caused by them should be alleviated It is also the personal responsibility of the prosperous to engage themselves in charity and to provide relief to the needy and the distressed No one except a true Brahmana has a right to beg and even he must take it up as a last resort (see note 32) To live by begging is not only undignified, but demoniac (*asuram*, says Manu) The Brahmana can live on the natural bounty of the land and the forests which are not someone's private property, or by agriculture or commerce, or as another last resort, enter the service of the state or become a temple or a domestic priest[45] The best Brahmanas however always preferred to be independent, service under others was considered to be a dog's life[45a] The only great and true Brahmana who ever served as a minister-priest was Vasista under the Iksvakus Men like Dhaumya who served the Pandavas did not have that stature Brhaspati and Sukra (priests of gods and demons) belong to the mythical age It is however the duty of the Brahmana to take active interest in public welfare and state affairs and advise the rulers The state and society should also see that the Brahmanas are not left in need to encourage and honour them in every way possible and to shower gifts on them is the duty of the state and the rich The *smrtis* also assert that it is the responsibility of the state to see that Brahmanas and others do their duties and obey the

laws of the land Passages from *dharma* and *artha sastras* and the *Mahabharata* support every one of the above statements

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THE HINDU ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF SOCIALISM

From antiquity in India public works such as irrigation, roads etc have been the responsibility of the government This was so not because, as Marx imagined Indian "civilization was too low ",[46] but because government was considered as a means to achieve the social good and promote it Indian political theory never agreed that the business of the state was only to rule A police state is no state Public morals as well as public welfare must be its concern In India the state never shared its paramount authority with any Church While cities and villages, castes and professions could make their own laws and customs be autonomous and govern themselves they could do this only when they all worked harmoniously with each other and did not clash with the good of all The authority to decide and ensure this was the state but a government ought to remember that it exists only for the sake of the people for preserving dharma and for promoting welfare and prosperity When it fails to do so the people have the right to rebel and remove the rulers by force if necessary Consequently, India never knew any *laisse-faire* and *laissez aller* within a state States may compete, quarrel fight and swallow each other but people within a state cannot be allowed to do so Caste against caste, class against class—this was not allowed by Indian political theory and in its best periods the state ensured that harmony prevailed It should not be permissible to make as much profit as one could in trade, commerce or by money-lending *Matsya-nyaya*, the big fish swallowing the small, was a principle allowed in inter-state relations but not within a state among classes and individuals families or city-corporations,

so that they could become super-powers which could dictate to princes, compel peace, or drive states to wars It was believed economic development ought to be a concern of the state An equitable division (*samvibhaga*) of the available wealth was a duty of the ruler * Agriculture mines, forests and even cattle welfare were supervised by the state Commerce and economic activity were controlled by the state and merchants were never allowed to become a greater political power than the government Indian history knew great merchants, but till the Western impact on India, the economic spirit and capitalism never fully manifested themselves here † While it was the duty of the state to ensure the welfare of the people, it was people's duty to see that the state did this The onus of keeping the rulers on the right track especially rested on the Brahmanas, the intellectuals Without being cowed down by the government, the Brahmanas had to act as the moral conscience of society, provide leadership to the people, teach the rulers dharma, and defy them and make others defy and overthrow them when they did not keep to the right path When a government was good, people prospered, there occurred a Ramarajya When a government was bad, people fell on evil days A government can create a golden age of peace and progress or of anarchy and regress [47] *Raja kalasya karanam* This was the ideal and like all ideals anywhere it was never completely realized in India The *smrtis*, Kautilya and Sukra, inscriptional evidence of the Gupta, Salivahana, Chola, Chalukya and Vijayanagar dynasties as well as literary records and folklore—all these testify to this The best of the Hindu kings and some of the ablest Muslim kings like Sher Shah and Akbar

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* *Samvibhajya yatha bhunkte sa rajno dharma ucyate* (*Santiparva* Madras Edition p 467 9) A king is a *data* and a *samvibhakta* also (p 473)

† The Vaisyas of Kekavarajya considered *Samvibhaga* as their business (*svakarma*) (*Santi* p 399) They equitably shared with others what they had ' *Samvibhagam Vyapasritah Vaisyah svakarmasthah*

tried to follow this ideal In the Muslim period however it was not conceded that people had the right to make demands on the government, or even think of changing it Dynastic rule in that period being generally established by right of conquest, people had to acquiesce in it, obey its laws and suppress their grievances But the better Muslim rulers always kept in view the interests of the security of the state and peoples' welfare, and associated the Hindus in their governments, though quite reasonably their chief concern was to perpetuate the rule of themselves and their heirs

What is said above should not make us forget that the evils of the caste system became increasingly greater, and the ideals of Hindu kingship more and more dim in medieval India The lower castes, the untouchables and the tribes suffered grinding poverty and untold misery But there was nothing oriental in this, the lot of the slaves and serfs, of the peasants and small tradesmen, and of the domestics and workmen in industries in Europe was not much better till recently Nowhere have liberty and democracy been completely achieved nor will be perhaps They are an ideal and an aspiration, a challenge as well as a programme The quest for conceiving them perfectly and the efforts to realize them fully will be never ending, with many setbacks but also many gains Human history provides no ground for pessimism, nor a firm foundation for an easy optimism

I may however mention in passing that from ancient times, Indian thought has been struggling to answer the question why is it some rule over others and others are ruled?[18] Just as Aristotle took it for granted that it is natural for some to be rulers and for others to be born to be ruled early Hindu thinkers by proclaiming *sudras* as men born to toil and serve endorsed a sort of natural slavery' doctrine, but like Stoicism, Buddhism and Vedanta doubted and questioned this myth Later smrtis denied political inequality and special privileges for the upper castes and allowed sudras to follow any profession

they liked independently The Bhakti movements tried to abolish caste 19th century reform movements and 20th century legislation have virtually removed social (though not economic) inequality The problem of equality and the struggle to formulate a concept of democracy has been perennially present in India India did not take inequality for granted

The evils that were already there in India were however preserved and new ones were introduced by foreign rule Society was not allowed to develop its laws and customs were 'petrified' (Nehru) and its progress terminated *for a while* But the reform movements inaugurated by a galaxy of persons from Rama Mohan Roy to Gandhi as well as the struggle for independence and the impact of European thought along with the introduction of technology and machinery from the West, have created a new society in India Only those who do not know the history of Indian people social institutions laws and thought can imagine that Indian society today remains the same it was say fifty or sixty years ago The differences among the Indias of Maurya Gupta Mughal Vijayanagar the British and the contemporary periods is as great as those among the Europes of the Periclean and the Augustan Ages, and of the periods of Charlemagne Louis XIV Elizabeth, Bismarck Victoria and De Gaulle

Some excessively patriotic Indians assuming that in India today we have the identical civilization which existed in the times of Yajnavalkya Kalidasa and Sankara talk proudly about the unchanging and unchangeable civilization of India, while Greek Roman and Egyptian civilizations, they say, have vanished They do not remember that even in ancient India Mohenjodaro Vedic Buddhist and Gupta civilizations differed very much from each other On the other hand foreigners listening to such talk and meeting with an 'exotic' people some antique customs and quaint' attitudes in modern India on the basis of a little reading and less travel theorize about the 'stagnation', arrest or 'petrification' of Indian civilization

and give up hopes for it Just because in a remote village in Rajasthan yoked oxen draw water out of a well with a mechanical contraption which may remind one (as it did Koestler) of three thousand years old Egyptian drawings or holy cows walk in the streets of Banaras jostling men, it would be naive to conclude that India remains unchanged It would be equally foolish to claim that there has been vast ' progress because some chic girls in Bombay and Delhi put on lipstick, sip cocktails smoke and discuss "authenticity" and "alienation". We are a new people today as our contemporaries in Greece and Italy are, with all our good and bad we live actually joined with them and others in this moment of history, whereas only ideally we are linked to the Indians of the Maurya and the Gupta times, as the modern Greeks and Italians are with the Greeks and the Romans of the Periclean and the Augustan ages

Man s creative spirit alters material conditions in every age these give rise to new ideas and institutions which in turn alter material conditions, because of which again ideas and institutions change "Men ', as Marx pointed out make their own history,—but under circumstances directly encountered given and transmitted from the past [40] This weight of the past which sometimes acts as a nightmare is what we Hindus call Karma Our ancestral souls living in us are now experiencing the results of their own doings But as Marx also did not forget to point out though this aspect of his teaching is often forgotten it is possible for man to elevate himself ' to be the sovereign of circumstances ' We have it in ourselves to assimilate our tradition and history – our Karma transcend and change it for the better or here we differ from Marx lapse back from such civilization as we have into barbarism or savagery either because we will it or acquiesce in it Civilization requires constant vigil, protection and advancement or else it is converted into a *Kaliyuga* *National character or* the personality of a culture and the course of a civilization do not remain eternal and fixed It is not true that a civilization is

completely determined only by its attitudes and beliefs formed in the course of *centuries its past achievements and failures its* conquests and humiliations the influences it exercised on others and the impacts it received Man is a free spirit, whenever he becomes aware of his condition he can remake, remould reform and revolutionize his own personality as well as that of his culture and society *He may not always succeed, but his* failure itself will alter him and his environment through his very attempt and consequent effects and experience We have now, for example, a new world, a new England and a new India *India did not* remain the same it was *before it* became a *British* colony, and there has been a new India in the making since the British left it On the other hand, Britain changed when its sovereign became the empress of India and a new Britain is emerging since its sovereign has become the Head of a Commonwealth with India too as *its member Except strict determinists* and those who believe that only heredity shapes a man others realize that these sociopolitical changes and the altered economico-technological situation are shaping a new type of men So we *have a new India and a new Indian society, not* disconnected with the past but born out of it influenced by it, yet different in its texture and ideals To what extent its ethos and ideals will change and whether these changes will be for the better or the worse are unpredictable

Yet, if we were to raise the question what could be the nature of the ideology and the kind of society which would be in tune with the Hindu attitude to money, work and the state it can be safely said that Hindu ethics can cohere with socialism [1] but not with capitalism or communism All wealth taught Tulsidas belongs to Rama (*Sampati sab Raghupati k ahi*) The whole earth (all land) is that of Krsna says a popular song (*Sabhi bhumi Gopal ki*) Even the great liberals of modern India as I will show were not in tune with capitalism, and colonialism Foreign rule, theorized *Dadabhai Naoroji* is not only oppressive but terribly expensive moreover

it "drains" away the wealth of the subject country to the ruling country and "impoverishes" and "exhausts" the former. "With the material wealth go also the wisdom and experience of the country".[3] The result is dissatisfaction and frustration, specially among the educated If the situation is not remedied "a great convulsion must inevitably arise".[4] Here we have the socialist attitude to colonialism and the idea that civilization has a material basis including a forecast of possible revolution Marx's analysis of the results of British rule in India did not differ radically from this Pleading that we must advance socially, "by a process of steady and gradual uplift", S. N Banerjea, another liberal said "this has been the normal path of progress in Hindu society" [5] Discarding the doctrine of *laissez faire*, M G Ranade argued that the ' true centre' round which economic theory should revolve is the "body politic', and not the individual and his interests Collective well-being the social good – these should be the ideals In India he argued, there is no contractual law or competitive spirit the accumulative urge is weak, there is no middle class, the social institutions do not encourage concentration of wealth labour is cheap and unskilled whereas capital is scarce and unenterprising, agriculture and industry are undeveloped, and religious ideals "condemn the ardent pursuit of wealth In addition to all this, foreign rule has drained away the wealth of the country Since modern thought is more and more recognising that the state is "the organ" for attending to national needs and welfare, and as in India the state alone can take the initiative the government, he urged, must pioneer new enterprises and actively guide and develop industry and agriculture.[6] It is extraordinary to see that this arch priest of Indian liberalism was in fact more a socialist than a liberal and was the first advocate in modern India of planned economic development of the country under the auspices of the state Ranade's analysis of the Indian situation is acute and prognostic To that it may be added that Indian political tradition is in favour of the state

controlling and guiding the economy, commerce, industry and agriculture of the country, and according to Indian theory the state must be always a welfare state Ranade the liberal conclusively showed that private enterprise and free competition would not work in India There are neither the material bases nor the appropriate ideology for it

Rama Mohan Roy a herald of modern India was a champion of social and material progress Dayananda was a teacher of activism equality and progress Vivekananda was perhaps the first Indian to call himself a socialist and also the first who was so much concerned about the poverty and low social status of the sudras and the untouchables He said applied Vedanta would result in removing social and economic inequality Tilak insisted that according to Hinduism man s duty is selfless work for the sake of the good of society Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave advocate a kind of utopian rural socialism He who does not engage himself in productive labour and live by the sweat of his brow has no right to live One is the trustee of what one has and should they say divide and share it with others M N Roy in his later phase preached a kind of ethical socialism Aurobindo was the first to talk of Asian Socialism based on spirituality Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru believed that except socialism nothing else can be relevant to India Java Prakash Narayan seems to believe in a kind of anarchic socialism based on decentralized autonomous villages *Asoka Mehta and R M Lohia are well known socialists* the former is original and constructive and is influenced by Buber Mannheim Wootton and Gandhian thought, while the latter is logical and doctrinaire All these believe in human dignity economic and social equality and democracy though they may differ about the methods of achieving them They attach greater value to national welfare than to individual prosperity However all of them eschew subversion and violence The distinguishing feature of Indian socialism is its emphasis on individual freedom personal ethics and repudiation of regimentation and

mass culture

In fact Hindu ethics can only support an ideology which approves work and welfare, social progress and material well-being, but which would not make unlimited personal wealth and economic prosperity the sole worthwhile ends A rigorous individualism, *laissez faire*, and unconcern with society go against it Hindu polity, I repeat, supports the idea that the business of the state is to promote social welfare, and initiate, control and guide not only public works but also agriculture and economic development As Bhisma told Yudhistira, the state exists for the people, it is created by their will, must rest on their consent and support and express their ideas and aspirations The Hindu empirico-pragmatic attitude and the intense Hindu longing for material comforts and sense enjoyments (uncurbed by the preachings of the Buddhists against *trsna* and Hindu teachers against women and gold *Kamini-Kancana*) will not allow the majority of Hindus to take seriously Gandhi–Bhave–J P Narayan type of utopian rural socialism, which requires more idealism, faith and tender-mindedness than the Hindus have The Hindus, who are tough-minded and a somewhat cynical and sophisticated people with a long history and a splendid many-sided civilization cannot follow that type of ideology based on austerity semi asceticism self sacrifice, manual labour and rural life, which devalues even basic civic necessities The offspring of the people who gave rise to the *Mahabharata* and Kautilya to Konarak Puri and Ajanta to Tantra and Vaisnavism, to the Gupta and Chola empires to Bharatanatya and Kalidasa and adore Kali, Krsna and Rama, cannot be made to desire and work for the type of society implied in the teaching of Gandhi Bhave The ascetic and the mystic may be able to form sects or cults in India but society on the whole and in the long run ignores them It was the tough-minded active idealists like Vyasa, Manu and Kautilya who shaped Indian society The Hindu loves ease, the climate also encourages that so machine culture with its labour-saving

techniques appeals to him The Hindu revels in organization intricacy, and classification His dream had always been an all Indian central government strong complex and efficient but based on regional cultural autonomy and diversity of customs and traditions faiths and practices Aurobindo showed that this had been the goal of Indian political genius The state has also an immemorial authority and sanctity in India So indifference to the state and self reliance, voluntary limitation of wants indifference to science and technology idyllic rural life in small villages bestrewn with cottages dependent on their own produce, – this type of utopian anarchic socialism cannot catch Hindu imagination

A good deal of the prestige and popularity of Sarvodaya and Bhoodan in independent India depend on the support and publicity given to them by the government and the esteem in which the saintliness of their leaders is held Francis of Assisi produced much enthusiasm and effect in his day, he had a large following but all that ended not in changing the structure of society but in the founding of the Franciscan order and formulating an impractical ideal for the general public Francis had support from the Church, and Bhoodan has of the government Both will remain as legends but legends have their own value and effect

The Hindu has not also got the requisite idealism self sacrifice and a burning Messianic faith in a golden future which would induce him to forego comforts leisure and pleasures and work with missionary zeal for building an utopia in which only distant future generations would enjoy heaven on earth He is more interested in the present than in the past or the future and would like to first himself enjoy the fruits of his work (Cp *Sarvasvam api santyajya karyam atmahitam naraih Santi* Ch 139) So he would resent the regimentation iron discipline and deprivations to which Russia and China have subjected themselves He is most of the time not sure that he has the final truth exclusively tolerance comes to a Hindu more naturally than to

many others. It may be argued by some that what are called Hindu passivity and resignation may allow a dictatorship to assume power. In Hindu history we have had no cruel and ruthless despots who terrorized their own people and considered themselves to be above law and morals. There were warriors and princes who in battles caused much havoc and seized thrones by poison or murder. Immorality was practised by some rulers in dealing with other states and aspirants to political power within their own states, but morality and law were the bases and the end of internal government. *Dharmaya raja bhavati.** Military and political power were not considered ends in themselves. Hindu culture did not glamourize soldiers and warriors as much as great popular rulers and lawgivers. British rule confirmed this tendency and taught this country respect for law and constitutionalism and the subordination of military to civil authority. Because of all this and the success of adult franchise and parliamentary democracy, a climate of opinion and circumstances conducive to the will to despotism and to be ruled thus are not present in India. As Hinduism dislikes intolerance, control of thought, violent upheavals, feverish agitations and mass murders, it is clear dictatorship, capitalism and communism are not in tune with its spirit. If India follows any path radically other than a democratic and socialistic path, it would be surprising and would also imply that the Hindu faith and ideals as previously understood have lost their hold on the people. It is comforting to know that Milton Singer, a leading anthropologist, starting from his permise that Indian "philosophy of renunciation" was "all along functionally linked to the material side of Indian life," concludes that as interpreted by the religious reformers for a century and specially Gandhi, it is "perfectly capable of providing the spiritual incentives and disciplines of a modern industrial society."

*The Mahabharata condemns dictatorship. *Masma tata balasthah tvam bhunjithah durbalam janam, ma tvam durbalacaksumsi pradaheruh sabandhavam* (*Santiparva* Madras Edition p. 467. Cp. p. 460-1, 473.) For the king *na dharmat vidyate param* (Ibid. p. 473.)

CHAPTER FOUR



The Greek Image of Indian Philosophy

From the earliest times Greece and India were in communication with each other *The Majjhima Nikaya* mentions that in Buddha's time there was a Yona or Indo Greek state Panini mentions Yonas and their script In *Mahavamsa* and *Dipavamsa* also Yonas and Yonakas are mentioned Yona is the Prakrit form of Yavana, in old Persian it is Yanna which occurs in a passage of the *Mahabharata, Santiparva* Western classical writers like Arrian and numismatic evidence show that long before Alexander there were Greeks settled to the north west of India and in various places in Asia Minor and eastern Iran Pythagoras is said to have visited India (Iamblichus) The Persian emperor Darius reached Indus and under a Greek mercenary, Skylax, sent an exploratory expedition (Herodotus) Darius annexed the Indus Valley and made it his twentieth satrapy In 329 B C Alexander s army entered the Punjab after conquering Persia Since that time right up to the fall of Rome, the West kept up a lively interest in India Greeks in the service of Persian emperors and the

companions generals and mercenaries of Alexander spread in Asia Minor and Greece stories and legends about India Megasthenes about 306 B C , came on an embassy to Candra gupta Maurya lived for sometime in Pataliputra and he also was for sometime at the court of Porus, whom he considered a greater king than Candragupta Fragments of what he wrote about India were preserved by later writers Eratosthenes, president of the great library at Alexandria from 240 to 196 B C wrote about India, depending upon the accounts given by the officers of Seleukus Nikator At the beginning of the Christian era was born Apollonius at Tyana in Cappadocia (Asia Minor) He was a great Neo Pythagorean teacher He was a vegetarian who never used any leather goods like shoes, lived an extremely ascetic life and practised silence for five years He gave away all his patrimony to his relations and never possessed anything It is said he visited India along with a Babylonian called Damis to acquaint himself with the discipline and doctrines of Brahmanas and was their guest for four months Later Apollonius was considered so holy and divine that temples were built for him emperors venerated him and he was held up as a rival to Jesus Christ Philostratus (born 172 A D) wrote a life of Apollonius, basing himself on a previous life by Maximus, extant letters of Apollonius and memoirs left by Damis Some scholars dismiss this life as legend and fictitious but it does not contain greater exaggerations than are contained in Ktesias or Megasthenes A Neo Platonist Bardesanes (born A D 154) of Edessa (Mesopotamia) chanced to meet the leader of an Indian delegation to the Roman emperor and learnt from him about Indian religion He wrote about India in Syriac Fragments from his account are available Clement (about 150–220 A D) the great Alexandrine Christian Father, learnt about India from his tutor Pantaenus, an early Christian missionary to India In his *Stromateis* Clement has something to say about Indian religious men

was impressed by the grandeur of their thought and considered it superior to what he knew. If we remember that Alexander was Aristotle's disciple, this was high praise for Brahmana wisdom. Aristobulus (says Strabo), who followed Alexander's expedition, saw two sophists, both Brahmanas, at Taxila. Each of them had many disciples. When not otherwise engaged they spent their time in the market-place giving good counsel to those who sought it. Shopkeepers gave them anything they wanted. Alexander admired their endurance and desired to see them; and Arrian praises him for this, because it shows that although he was in the grip of the passion for glory, he was not altogether without a perception of better things.* Alexander sent Onesicrates (so recount Plutarch, Arrian and Palladius) to bring the sophists to him. Dandamis was the chief of them. One among them called Calanus refused to talk to Onesicrates till the latter too became naked and became his disciple (Plutarch). But Dandamis was generous and considerate; he heard what the Greek had to say. Onesicrates told him that Alexander, Son of God, wanted to see him and that if Dandamis went he would receive gifts, otherwise he would be killed. As Palladius says, Dandamis without even getting up from the recumbent posture in which he was lying heard this message with indifference and gave a scornful reply.

As Dandamis' reply contains a good summary of Brahmana doctrine as the Greeks understood it and as the best sources (Arrian, Plutarch, Palladius) agree on its content, I shall now analyse it.

Dandamis said he was as much a son of God as Alexander.

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* Alexander was a noble man, one who first clearly perceived the brotherhood of man, but for various reasons the philosophers of the Peripatetic and the Stoic schools were hostile to him. (See Tarn, *Alexander*, II, p. 69 etc.) Arrian was a Stoic.

(Arrian) * God is the supreme king and creator of light peace life, water, bodies and souls He is the master of souls he encloses the souls in flesh and leaves them on earth so that they can prove whether they can live according to his commands God is not the author of evil, he abhors wars and violence No mortal is God The body is like a garment to the soul, at death it leaves the body like a torn garment, becomes a spirit and ascends to God When the soul goes to his presence God requires an account of its life on earth judges it and punishes it for its evil + The soul never dies and cannot be destroyed (Palladius) It is interesting to note the doctrine that souls too were created and that souls are to face post mortem judgment No Hindu system of philosophy except possibly the Pancaratra Bhagavata accepts the proposition that souls are created for anything which is created has a beginning and is destroyable But it must also be noted that Ramanuja denies the Pancaratra acceptance of this doctrine The idea God is not responsible for evil recalls Iranian dualism Ambrosius in his account of Dandamis teaching does not at all refer to God s creation of souls His version too says God encloses us in flesh to test how we would live in the world after coming from him Dandamis is also therein reported to have said that God restores again the light of life to the departed It is not clear whether this indicates transmigration or resurrection i e a new life again on earth after a rebirth or an embodied life in the other world It is also interesting to see that Dandamis says the soul becomes Spirit after death The distinction between spirit and soul

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* Elsewhere I conjectured that this and what an Egyptian philosopher Ammon told Alexander made him think and reach the conclusion that all men are brothers See my *Studies in the Problems of Peace* Asia Publishing House Bombay p 371

+ In the *Kausitaki Upanisad* we find the idea of the soul going to heaven *rendering an account of its doings on earth* and being judged thereupon The *Book of Enoch* and the doctrines of the Essenes and the Gnostics have ideas similar to those of Dandamis

(Arabic, *Ruh* and *nafs*) is not made in Indian Philosophy*, although spirit is but the *atman* and soul the *suksma sarira* (subtle body consisting of the ten senses, the life principle, *prana*, and mind, *antahkarana*) The spirit is, so to say, the core of the soul, the *antaratma* Thus far Dandamis' metaphysics

I now come to his ethics Dandamis is satisfied with his circumstances a hut thatched with leaves fruits in the forest and water in the river To everyone the earth gives enough By possessing nothing one enjoys tranquillity, one can then have no cares and go anywhere Whatever can be amassed with anxious care becomes the source of sorrow and vexation and brings ruin in the end † Whatever was worthy – basic necessities viz leaves drinking water and fruits – Dandamis had already, and anything Alexander could offer was utterly useless to him He coveted nothing and was afraid of nothing If he lived the fruits and water of India were enough for him, and if he were to be killed he would be glad to be delivered from the body Only those who want wealth and dread death can be tempted or threatened (Arrian Palladius) Dandamis also wondered why Alexander and his men thus endlessly wandered all over the world without any good coming out of it (Arrian) So Dandamis did not stir from where he was Plutarch says that when Dandamis heard about Socrates Pythagoras and Diogenes he commented they were men of genius although from excessive deference to law they very much subjected themselves to it (Plutarch) Apparently Dandamis meant that Spirit is superior to Law that the wise man has the norm within himself and is not merely guided by the positive laws and social conventions

The Greeks say that one Indian sophist Calanus however was won over to go to Alexander and even joined his entourage

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* One might say the *atman-jiva* distinction somewhat corresponds to this

† These are sentiments found in many Hindu and Buddhist works and popular *satakas* like those of Bhartrhari

Arrian following Megasthenes says this was due to his lack of self-control Calanus was rebuked by some Indians for having left fellowship with God and a contented life in the forests without a care and cheered with the hope of a blessed after life (Palladius) Calanus however seems to have explained that since he had completed his 40 years' ascetic discipline he could leave the forest and go with Alexander (Strabo) Plutarch however says that it was the Taxiles who persuaded Calanus to go to Alexander and that he also advised the Greek king to control his empire from its centre and not wander away to its distant extremities

We find that Dandamis was also patriotic he found India had enough to offer him what he wanted he considered life in Indian forests worthy and highly satisfying and did not want anything better He also resented Alexander being called master of the world and his invading India The patriotism of Indian philosophers comes out very well in other accounts A number of hill tribes and small states in the plains welcomed Alexander received him readily and declared for him Philosophers reviled these peoples and their leaders and exhorted them to revolt against him Some tribes revolted and one of these led by a leader named Sambus who first accepted Alexander's suzerainty but later revolted inspired by philosophers were particularly difficult to deal with After the rebellions were suppressed Alexander slaughtered or hanged many of these philosophers also (Arrian Plutarch) Plutarch further mentions that after suppressing Sambus Alexander asked the captured philosophers why they encouraged revolts and they replied that they wanted their people to live with honour and die with honour It is clear they valued human dignity very highly Alexander is also reported to have conversed with them These were some of the things they said A powerful man who does not make himself feared is loved by people (Radhakrishnan is reported to have given Stalin a similar advice) He who does the impossible can become God Life has many evils One should live as long as

mysteries They were also afraid that after learning philosophy their wives might leave them, for philosophy teaches contempt for pleasure and toil, and for life and death too, and so philosophers do not serve others (Strabo) (Upanisadic and Puranic examples of women philosphers contradict this) (see note 45A to last chapter) A free life was what Indian philosophers prized most Pseudo-Callisthenes however describes another curious tradition Male Brahmanas lived on one side of the river and the women on the other side Every year the males crossed over to the other side once and spent forty days with their wives and returned back, till two children were born to each couple Thereafter they practised celibacy, but if no children were born they did this for five years Thereafter under all circumstances they practised continence *

The above accounts show that the Greeks described the several types of *vanaprasthas* and *sannyasins* who lived in *asramas* and *tapovanas* Descriptions of them are found in the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and they agree with Greek accounts Megasthenes however seems to have confused *brahmacarya asrama* with the final two *asramas* The Greeks in general ignored *grhasta* brahmanas, i e Brahmana householders although Megasthenes refers to sacramental rites (*samskaras*) such as *garbhadharana* and *pumsavana*, *upanayana* etc, which are all aimed at obtaining good progeny and instructing them about *dharma* and *Brahman*

I now come to Brahmana doctrines as described by the Greeks Life was bewailed as it was full of misery (Plutarch) Our life is like that of babies in wombs Nothing that happens to man is good or bad, otherwise the same things could not give pleasure to some and cause sorrow to others (Megasthenes) Death releases man from misery so it was anticipated with

* Customs somewhat similar to this were found among the Brahmanas of Gauda and Kerala

souls from this world by departing souls (B Porphyry) Porphyry and others refer to the practice of ascetics self immolating them selves (The examples of Vrddhakanya and Sabari mentioned in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana may be recollected) Pseudo Origen says Brahmanas conceived God as Light and Word not of course physical light or articulate speech By Word they mean Reason whereby the wise discern hidden mysteries of knowledge Only when vanity the outermost covering of the soul is discarded can the Word be known Deity gives the body as a covering for the soul Word is corpo real and wears the body as an external covering as one wears a coat and when it divests itself of the body it becomes manifest Man must wage relentless war against the body and sensual appetites which imprison him then only can he go to God He who conquers the body is a God As fish see sunlight when they spring up out of the water into air Brahmanas see the pure sunlight when they shuffle off their bodies (Pseudo Origen) The doctrine of *Vak* (Word) is found in Indian philosophy perhaps this writer came to have a vague idea of it It is also interesting that in this passage a sort of mystic doctrine Word taking on flesh and man becoming God is echoed Indian religion Western mystery religions and Christ ianity maintained various forms of such a doctrine

The Greek writers refer to Buddhist *Bhiksus* the *Sramanas* also Megasthenes says Brahmanas had greater repute as they were more in agreement in their dogmas The sramanas were drawn from all classes lived in temples and houses (*viharas*) founded by kings (Porphyry) They worshipped *stupas* (*caityas*) and practised truth (Clement)

The holiness and sincerity of Brahmanas and Sramanas is attested to by all writers They were better in deeds than words as Megasthenes said (Strabo) Of course some of them were priests diviners astrologers and physicians these too practised varying degrees of asceticism Both men and women practising celibacy studied philosophy with them

I now finally come to the great Neo Pythagorean teacher Apollonius account of Indian philosophy He learnt all he could about Indian philosophy from two persons King Phraotes of Taxila and Iarchas Chief of Brahmanas who resided on a hill within four days journey beyond the city Paraka in the country between the rivers Hyphasis (Bias) and Ganges King Phraotes palace was like that of any citizen of a better class He had no sentinels or bodyguards and had very few servants The contrast between Babylonian royal pomp and Indian regal simplicity struck the visitors He was a vegetarian eating only what he cultivated he drank little wine he hunted for exercise but gave away what he killed Everything about him was simple and moderate He had few wants he was wealthy but he employed his wealth to do good to friends and subsidize neighbouring barbarian tribes to prevent them from ravaging his country and to make them prevent others from making inroads The king held wisdom to be above royalty He contrasted the Greek and Indian attitudes to philosophy In ancient days when a ship came into port people asked its crew whether they were pirates because piracy was so common then Similarly the Greeks Phraotes said asked every stranger whether he was a philosopher In fact among Greeks philosophy became like piracy for most borrowed some philosophy or other and strutted about in it awkwardly as if in a stolen ill fitting garment Like thieves who are afraid of justice and hurry to enjoy the present hour in gluttony and debauchery these so-called philosophers profess to be philosophers but immerse themselves in sensual pleasures The Greeks punish coiners of bad money but unfortunately do not punish utterers of a false philosophy In contrast to his Phraotes declared in India philosophy was a high honour God s most precious gift to man One was not allowed to study it unless it was proved that one s character and heredity were pure Living witnesses and public records had to testify that one s ancestors were good One had to live in a Brahmana home for sometime so that his

character and intelligence were deemed fit for philosophy. Both conduct and personality including physiognomy were inquired into, for one's mind and disposition are mirrored in one's face After all this only one was taught philosophy What the Taxilan King said was true is known from the Upanisads and the Jataka stories Only to a man of proved moral and intellectual worth was philosophy imparted It may also be noted that from Janaka of Videha through Phraotes of Taxila to Radhakrishnan at present, philosopher-statesmen are not only a tradition but a living reality in India

The king's discourse shows that for ancient Indians philosophy was something which one had to live taking it seriously and as an all absorbing concern, which could not be just borrowed from others and repeated parrot-wise With long preparation, mental and moral, it had to be appropriated so that it could become one s disposition and animating faith for which and by which one lived

I now come to what Apollonius learnt from Iarchas The Brahmanas do not keep as a secret anything which is worthy to be known, especially by those who have an excellent memory*, for, said Iarchas they honour memory most They can see into the very soul tracing out its qualities by a thousand signs (This implies the soul for them was not *nirguna*) Virtue was the sole criterion for admission to the college of Brahmanas sometimes their number was 87, sometimes only one and when Apollonius was there it was 18 Whereas Apollonius considered that to know oneself was the most difficult thing, Iarchas told him that it was the first and elementary knowledge and that only he who knew himself first could know all things There is a tradition that an Indian stranger told Socrates precisely the same thing He who is good Iarchas held, is a god On the soul and transmigration and the possibility of knowing past births their views were similar to those of Pythagoras According to Iarchas the Greek view that not to do wrong is to be just was inade-

*Memory perhaps understood in the sense in which Augustine used it

quate, it was like the Egyptians praising the Roman proconsuls who were not venal The world is composed of five co-ordinate elements, it is a hermaphrodite animal which reproduces all creatures by itself and of itself* It is Intelligence, providing for the wants of creatures and punishing them for wrong doing But there is a first God who created the world Next to him are gods who rule its several parts The gods are born of ether and mortals of air Below the earth but distinct from it there is a terrible deadly place (hell) That was Iarchas' cosmology The Brahmanas believed in astrology and divining power

Apollonius considered these views wiser and more divine than his own He thought that Brahmanas dwell on earth and yet not on earth, possessing nothing, they have all things, they live in places fortified, but yet without walls Apollonius conveys something profound here Since the soul is always pure and non doer†, when one acts with detachment, although one acts he does not act *Karmany abhipravrttopi naiva kimcit karoti sah* (*Gita*, IV 20 Also V 7–8, 13) Those who have achieved balance *and tranquillity transcend the world even when alive, for they* are established in the Transcendent They seem to be in the world but in truth they are abiding in the Transcendent (Ibid, V 19, 26) They are here, yet not here Such people have nothing for their egoism (*ahamkara*) is extinct, and they experience isolation (*Kaivalya*) and ineffable bliss, also empirically they have abandoned everything (*sannyasa*, *aparigraha*) and have gone forth (*parivrajana*) from the world, and yet since they have achieved the *summum bonum*, the *atman*, for the sake of which everything is sought, they have everything Finally, they live in open spaces *in the forests, on the banks of rivers and on mountain tops, their* minds are open they have no spirit of exclusiveness, and no

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*Cp the Vedic myth out of Purusa was th whole universe born his limbs *being the different parts of the world* The Puranas also mention the *Virat Purusa myth*

† Mainly according to Sankhya and Advaita Vedanta Some systems do no accept this

intolerance, they are ever ready to receive Truth Thus theirs is an open life On the other hand, having conquered passions and desires, their holiness protects them like armour, nothing of this or the other world can make an onslaught on them or subdue them They are prefectly free spirits This is what apparently Apollonius meant as he was speaking about Brahmanas with a new understanding, but Damis and Philostratus interpret him in mythopoeic way, as they do not comprehend this insight

Thus the Greeks, as the great Clement said, realized that philosophy with its blessed advantages "flourished long ago among the barbarians (=non-Greeks) including Indians, diffusing its light and eventually penetrated into Greece"

The apocalyptic eschatological teaching of Jesus Christ and St Paul emphasized renunciation,* celibacy, freedom from enmity, non-resistance to evil and love of even enemies Christ's teaching "was purely and exclusively world-renouncing" (Schweitzer)† and "was unworldliness in its extreme form" (Bishop Gore)†† Prayer continence and waiting for the end of the world were practised with a puritanical zeal by the early Christians and by the second century there were many celibate Christians In the second century continence came to be looked upon as asceticism *par excellence* and the body and things of the world were abhorred Some gnostic Christians refused to baptise married persons In the third century asceticism came to be considered important and honourable By the fourth century there were communities of male ascetics and virgins especially in Syria and Egypt Hermit life was considered to be superior to community life Like Christ, one had to practise charity and self-denial and achieve perfection through suffering and the martyrdom of self abnegation, chiefly virginity The demons want to grab souls through temptations, chiefly lust,

* Mark, X 17–22 Luke XIV 33 I John II 15

† *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* p 248 9

†† *New Commentary on Holy Scripture* Pt III p 287

Gnosticism and Manichaeism as it earlier did the Orphic doctrines Pythagoreanism and later Stoicism This was possible because since remote times the Greeks knew about India and from the time of Alexander their interest in it was greater Right till the fall of Rome Europe was in continuous contact with India and its image of India to some extent shaped Western religious life especially asceticism and monachism These spread westwards through Asia Minor Syria and Egypt

The Greek understanding of the ascetico mystical philosophy of India was on the whole correct if we remember the difficulties of language and communication This hurdle was likely to be greater when the men who came into contact were not philosophers or when interpreters were used for as Dandamis told Onesicrates water cannot be expected to flow pure through mud (Strabo) Greek accounts therefore teem with errors myths and contradictions but they do catch the essential spirit of Brahmanical ascetic phiolosophy They totally fail to have an inkling of the Buddhist doctrines of *nirisvara* (no God) *anatma* (no soul) and *nirvana* and misunderstand the veneration of stupas Clement however knew that Boutta (Buddha) was honoured like a god because of his holiness and St Jerome knew the legend of the virgin birth of Buddhas (Buddha) Authentic or not the image of India projected by these classical writers was that of a brooding other worldly and contemplative people From ancient times right up to our times (e g Schweitzer) there are many who consider Indian philosophy to be world negating pessimistic and mystical It is true there is in Indian thought a strong ascetico mystical trend but as I showed in earlier chapters it would be a great mistake to suppose that this adequately and fully represents the Indian Spirit Just as St Paul St Antony Cassian St Benedict and St Francis represent only one aspect of Western thought and life Yajnavalkya Sankara Jaina and Buddhist monachism Hindu sannyasins and Gandhi represent only one aspect of the Indian complex

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Towards the end of the last century J W McCrindle collected annotated and translated in six volumes almost everything written about India in Greek and Latin In 1916 appeared H G Rawlinson s *India and the Western World* Cambridge It gives a succinct account of the intercourse between India and the Greco-Roman world from the earliest times to the fall of Rome based on the entire relevant classical literature In *The Classical Accounts of India* Calcutta 1960 R C Majumdar compiled the English translations (mostly McCrindle s) of them in a single accessible volume In it is also reprinted O De B Priaulx s extensive summary of Philostratus Life of Apollonius published in 1873 Also of use are W W Tarn *Alexander the Great* 2 Volumes and *The Greeks in Bactria and India* both Cambridge 1948 and 1951 A K Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* Oxford, 1957 and S. Radhakrishnan *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* Oxford, 19 0

CHAPTER FIVE



Philosophical Thought in India

THE PHILOSOPHIES OF A CULTURE HAVE A COMMON GENIUS

There has been no uniform conception of philosophy in the West The Greek conception differs very much from that of Kant, and Kant's philosophical thought is in turn altogether dissimilar from that of a man like Ayer However, there are certain broad characteristics which distinguish the philosophy of European culture from the philosophies of Hindu and Chinese cultures Within the same culture, of course, there are a number of clear-cut directions It may, for example be pointed out that philosophy, as conceived in Germany, Spain, and Italy, differs very much from the philosophy that has evolved in Britain and Scandinavian countries There are, certainly, exceptions Britain has produced Bradley and Whitehead, and Denmark, Kierkegaard Still we are not far wrong in thinking that there is something which distinguishes the philosophy of one tradition from that of another This difference is inevitable because philosophical activity takes place not in a vacuum but within a historical setting History is influenced by the geography of the

country and the racio-cultural patterns that have been established Again foreign impacts produce currents of far reaching change in habits of thought as well as action To cite an instance but for the German influence sweeping through Coleridge the Cairds and Green Bradley or Bosanquet would be unexplainable I will therefore assume that the philosophy of a tradition can be taken as a historic and continuous phenomenon with a special genius of its own and perhaps a destiny as well

Whereas most of my remarks will apply to all the Indian philosophies *some are applicable to the philosophies of Hindu tradition only* By Hindu tradition I mean the civilization and culture that have been given rise to and formulated by the peoples of Mohenjedaro and Harappa the Vedic Aryans and the successive generations of their offspring I will now go on to describe some of the characteristics that distinguish the philosophies of India from philosophies of other cultures

Sense of Infinity Theory of Cycles

Anybody who has grasped India imaginatively is struck first by the fact that it is a vast domain with varying climates—huge and sprawling touching Soviet Central Asia on one side and reaching off to Ceylon on another side In the mountainous regions and the valleys one often comes across scenic grandeur of immense beauty and in the jungles and deserts one feels the isolation and utter loneliness of man lost in nature Terrific natural phenomena like earthquakes *torrential rains and devastating* floods are common in India Beasts of magnificent power and reptiles secreting poisons for which no antidote is known are man s neighbours In India it might be said nothing has limits The light the blaze of the tropical sun is unlimited He scorches enervates and yet sustains The bright and limpid starry sky at night overwhelms the man in the plains Living thus amid things which know no bounds the Indian develops a *sense of infinity Nothing has an end—neither man nor* nature for unending seems to be the cyclic cosmic process The

life giving spring followed by the scorching summer, succeeded by the winter of cold breezes from Himalayan glaciers rotate in sequence They fail not to come or to pass on Order, *rta*, seems to be their essence May not the same advent and disappearance birth and death be true as well of the world as a whole? The mighty world compared to which man seems so tiny and helpless looms immense and without a beginning point And how can this glorious thing have an end? Subject to fast disintegration but ever resurrecting itself through an inner law of its own the world is infinite This sense of infinity was responsible for the theory of the cyclic rotation of the creations and the dissolutions of the world In mythology as well as in philosophy this belief is accepted All Indian systems accept the world process as infinite It is infinite in the sense that it begins stops and recommences—but always continues Only one Indian philosophy, the Mimamsa maintains that the world is eternal it always was as it is at present it always will be as it is The vindication of the law so the Mimamsa argues, demands nothing short of this Unbreakable is the moral law, and equally so must be its counterpart the physical law The world, therefore can only be eternal Thus we see that the sense of infinity, which dawned in the racial consciousness of the cowherds of the Indus Valley continues to be acceptable in the form of the theory of cycles in all Indian philosophies

THE GLORY OF THE SOUL HUMAN DIGNITY

Another peculiar trait of Hindu philosophy is its sense of human dignity Man in Indian thought is no doubt a speck in the infinite universe but his is a divine destiny and majesty None is his creator and a master he knows not There is nothing greater than man and this says the Mahabharata is the great secret (*Guhyam brahma tadidam bravimi na hi manusat srestataram hi kincit* *Santi parva* 180 12) The creation of souls is an anathema to Indian philosophy A created thing cannot be eternal nor can a created thing be the maker of its own fate

in the theistic systems such as the Nyaya and the Vedanta of Ramanuja souls are uncreated, are themselves responsible for their doing and undoing, and have to attain their own salvation "Atman is the friend of Atman, Atman is the foe of the Atman" In Indian theistic systems God only regulates the moral law He does not interfere with souls and their destiny

MORAL FREEDOM 'KARMA'

The problem of evil and inequality is one of the most vexed problems in all philosophy, but all Indian systems adopt a uniform solution We have already seen that the Indian's conception of the world as infinite will not allow him to think of creation *ex nihilo* His sense of human dignity and of the worth and absoluteness of the human soul does not allow him to view it as created The two combined lead to the theory of *karma* Every one can see that the world is imperfect that there are inequalities, and that there is much suffering But, since these cannot be inflicted upon souls by an external force, they must be the results of the soul's doing Beginningless is the world, beginningless are the souls What they are reaping now must have been sowed by them No other power, divine or diabolical, can rule over the souls and inflict inequality and suffering upon them The Hindu sages intuit the human soul as the grandest and the most mysterious thing in the world The iniquity and the misery which souls are now experiencing is indeed a boon to them, for in the enjoyment of it they are recovering themselves from the fall—fall from the dignity which is the soul's inherent right In the tractless horizons of time is lost the answer to the question When did the souls fall from their inherent majesty and purity? When souls have worked off the effects of their fall, they will once again become free, not only free from the old taints of evil and misery but also free to fall once again, if they so will The souls in Hindu philosophy have absolute freedom to do as they will They can go to the hell they like in the way they like, and, reawakened, they migh

stand up, cast away the coils of ignorance and misery, and fly back to the glory that eternally awaits them This, in short, is the theory of *karma* and of rebirth Hindu philosophy tells us that nobody forced the souls to be born They wanted to be born, and so they are born Yearning to be born, to act, and to enjoy the fruits of actions possesses some of the souls, and down they descend into the world of mortality They will continue to be here so long as they have not enjoyed the fruits of all they have done and willed in this and in past births and so long as they do not will to lift themselves up from mortality to immortality This clearly, is no philosophy of determinism but rather a philosophy of freedom

Tragic Sense

Philosophies of India are overshadowed by a tragic sense of life Disease, old age, and death stalk across all the philosophical corridors of India and one confronts these ghosts at every turn Life was particularly tragic to the Indians around 600 B C In the *Veda* we find a simple naivete and joy of life "May we live for a hundred Autumns" is a frequent Vedic prayer In Vedic times population was limited sheep oxen and horses abounded fertile wheat growing areas stretched across thousands of acres of the Indo-Gangetic plains, and the life giving juice of the soma plant was ever ready No wonder that for the Vedic peoples life was a poetic dream the more of it the better Intertribal wars the incoming of new tribes famine flood and pestilence and the tropical fecundity of people evaporated the optimism of India Life became a battle It was in such circumstances that the creative century the century of the Upanisadic seers and the Buddha dawned In the *Upanisads* we find some pessimism People are fed up with the daily round of duties the monotony of life, and the inevitable staring at the face of death It was in such circumstances that what might be called the tragic philosophies of India emerged Death is inevitable, does it avail us if we enjoy a

sneaking pleasure or two? Time will in its irresistible sweep erase our footprints What does it profit to achieve anything? Life verily is a vanity This was the feeling of some of the reflective minds of the age In the Buddha Jaina and Sankara we find this tendency dominant But even in these philosophies the problem is how to conquer suffering and death Thus we see that the *tragic sense of the Indian was not a passive helpless* tragic feeling It was dynamic in that it did not remain content by declaring human life to be bleak and human destiny to be a Sahara How shall we convert this seemingly insipid monotonous mill of existence into a working and blissful song of the spirit? That was their problem It is quite unlike what modern apostles like Heidegger say—that death is the only certainty for man and that meanwhile as he has the freedom to do something he had better do it This was not the sort of *tragic feeling* entertained by ancient Indians They *confronted* death but wished to conquer it Transcendence was what they aimed at And the unmistakable answer of all Indian philosophies is that the tragic is not the whole of existence for according to Vedanta Brahman is *ananda* bliss

THE IDEAL OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY INTEGRAL MAN

According to the Hindu philosophy of life the complete man is he who has achieved the four ends of life—*dharma* (righteousness virtue) *artha* (material possessions prosperity) *kama* (pleasure love) and *moksa* (liberation) According to Vatsyayana *kama* is experience of objects through the senses in accordance with their capacity to gratify us (*visayesu anukulyatah pravrttih kamah*) Corresponding to these ends are the four stages of life (1) *brahmacarya* (the stage of austerity chastity and study wherein one acquires knowledge and maturity) (2) *garhastya* (the stage of the married householder wherein one attains pleasure and prosperity through the due discharge of his duties) (3) *vanaprastha* (the stage of retirement to a forest hermitage after signs of old age have appeared and after sons

As Bhisma has said (preliminary to the Angarista Kamandaka discourse) enjoyment of *trivarga* without the desire for fruits culminates in *moksa*

Traditionalism

Another important distinguishing feature of Hindu philosophies is that they are all traditional None of them starts *de novo* All of them insist that they are only rediscovering old truths They have therefore a sense of belonging to None of them dares to be alien to the modes of thought and habit of the people Even when new ideas are formulated Hindu philosophers read them into the ancient texts Nothing is ever presented as an innovation There is after all something to be said for this way of philosophizing Nothing absolutely original can ever be formulated, whether it is in science music or philosophy the present builds on the past The Hindu thinkers believed that new light would flash in the assimilation and re thinking of an old truth In short philosophy within the Hindu tradition was a superstructure like the medieval cathedral in Europe which was built altered rebuilt and repainted by successive generations Philosophy was conceived as a stupendous corporate effort Individuals no doubt contribute but they are like the innumerable mountain streams that join a river and remain anonymous but useful

Philosophy a Power and a Privilege

A result of this traditionalism was to look upon philosophy as a precious heritage Unlike in the West philosophy was something to be cherished like gold preserved with all care and handed on to posterity In the *Upanisads* we read innumerable stories of people acquiring philosophy with great trouble and effort for those who had it passed it on to a chosen few only— confidants their own sons or long standing disciples In short philosophy was a treasure and a power whereby man [illegible] unto salvation The ancient Greeks too had such a [illegible]

of philosophy The Pythagoreans the Neo-Platonists—not to speak of the Orphic and Eleusinian mystics—all had their esoteric groups. To outsiders they revealed nothing This tendency is found in most of the Hindu philosophies There is such a thing as *adhikara* one becomes entitled to receive a philosophy by one s birth and discipline

Philosophy is to be Appropriated through Faith

A consequence of this is the conception of philosophic discipline which is so peculiar to Hindu systems Philosophy in India is not often open it is not something which whosoever likes may peep into touch and leave On the gate of his Academy Plato is said to have written that none who knows no mathematics should enter here In a similar way in ancient India philosophy was the crown of the sciences One first mastered the other sciences like grammar sacred lore polity the sciences of war and then went in search of the highest science *paravidya* The famous sage Narada studied much and grew in years before he went to Sanatkumara for receiving the Word The sage Svetaketu finished all his education before he received instruction in philosophy from his father Philosophic discipline in India consisted not in logical criticism and analytical study of doctrines With faith one had to receive the precious teaching appropriate it by meditation examine it by questionings and discourse with co students and teacher and realize the truth of it All logical disputation was only to confirm oneself in truth and remove the thorns of unbelief and ill advised criticism That is the conception of the use of logic as we find it in the ancient book of Gautama.

Philosophy a Force for Preservation of Culture

As a result of this philosophy in India has become a force for the preservation of culture and traditional modes of thought and living In the West philosophy has been a critique

of previous thought and way of life, and philosophies often acted as the gadflies leading to progress in civilization In India, however, criticism had been only of rival schools of thought and was never levelled against one's own school or against the assumptions on which the Hindu way of living was based This had its disadvantages Instead of opening up new horizons of thought and possible ways of living, philosophy became a sort of cold-storage apparatus for the preservation of current modes of thought Over millenniums, beliefs like *karma* and habits of life like *varnasrama* received no stringent criticism and much less defiance They were, whenever gross abuses prevailed, sought to be reformed and adjusted Thus, revolutions never occurred in Indian thought or in Indian life It is easily intelligible how in India the pristine civilization continued unbroken, while in almost all the other countries ancient civilizations have disintegrated and crumbled * Today there are only vestiges of the Greek, the Roman, the Byzantine, and the Aztec civilizations On the other hand, in India if we read the descriptions of Indian life and customs in a book such as the *Ramayana*, the *Kadambari* or the *Arthasastra* we find that they did not differ in essentials from the life as led in the villages today The only parallel to this kind of preservation of civilization is to be found in China, and communism has now of course, disrupted it Another reason for this continuity is that, in general, Indian thinkers violently criticized each other s schools but extended tolerance towards all theories On the other hand so long as one adhered to the *varnasrama* in practice, people were left in peace, but the slightest deviation from the established way of life was frowned upon and extinguished This is to be contrasted with the temperament of Semitic cultures which were indifferent to practice but uncompromising in doctrinal matters

* This and what follows I uncritically believed some years ago Further studies and travel in India and abroad have convinced me this is not entirely correct

ALOOFNESS FROM EMPIRICAL SCIENCE

Another difference between philosophy in India and philosophy in the West is that Indian philosophy never had any intimate and fructifying contact with natural science Ancient India had science even as ancient Greece In mathematics, in astronomy, and even in medicine and surgery Indians made remarkable achievements as far back as the second century A D Even when foreign travel had become common and settlements had been established by *Indians in the Far East they never* sought to bring changes into their way of life nor did they institute any sort of camparative studies of Indian religions with the religions of other countries Like the Romans who always believed in their own civilizing mission and considered others as barbarians Indians felt and held themselves to be superior to every *other nation* on earth *Manu for instance says that all men in* the world regulated their lives in accordance with the norms laid down by the upper castes of this country (*Etad desa prasutasya sakasat*) The famous Muslim scholar *Alberuni* has written about this Indian trait and in many Indian books we find the foreigners—Arabs Persians and so forth—referred to as the *mlecchas* and sometimes spoken of as comparable to animals Similarly though Indian astronomers like Aryabhatta discovered the rotation of the earth and the real cause of eclipses and medical books correctly described human anatomy and physiology these made no impact on Indian philosophy Unlike Bruno and Galileo they produced no commotion in India The reason *might be that Indian philosophy and religion* were never geocentred nor was man regarded as the key to the universe Therefore when astronomers found that the earth revolved round the sun none was shocked and perhaps few believed In consequence such science as existed was paid no heed and was killed by indifference This lack of contact with *progressive science made Indian philosophy* content itself with being an ally of religion Some philosophies no doubt vigorously criticized theisms of all sorts But even they remained

religious In India philosophy always was a faith by which men lived, it was never a critique of faith And in the few instances when it criticized an old faith, it created and substituted a new faith Buddhist philosophy is an instance of this tendency

Philosophy as Interpretation

Because of all these characteristics philosophy in India has been largely interpretation, whereas elsewhere it has been constructive Philosophers such as Aristotle or Kant, we find, have borrowed much from their predecessors At the same time, they destroyed much that was contributed before them, and on the debris they have sought to erect, partly with old bricks, a new mansion In all such attempts the architecture, however, is individual The stamp of a particular philosopher's genius is unmistakably clear in his handiwork In India there have appeared minds as great as in the West, but they have sought to bring out the inner core from what has been already said The one fortunate thing had been that the texts which were taken as the standards were masterly works with a richness of content and a plasticity of thought which never fell below and sometimes excelled Plato's dialogues Philosophy understood as interpretation has one distinct advantage It takes the thought bequeathed by the old masters as something which need neither be swallowed like pink pills nor brushed off as a heap of rubbish The philosopher in India is made to meditate and enter into the spirit of an old text and express it once again in his own way The malleability of experience and the poetic beauty of texts like the *Upanisads* and the *Gita* have enabled competent men to build up heterogeneous systems, all claiming to be based on those texts.

Philosophy as Science of Salvation

Another characteristic of Indian philosophy is that it is

literally means that which reviews At first logic seems to have appropriated this term for in logic arguments are subjected to scrutiny and judgment of validity or invalidity is pro nounced Logic enables one to analyse the propositions put forward by various schools and thinkers reflect upon them pass them all in review and accept the best It was in this sense that *anvikshiki* was in ancient days considered as the light of all knowledge the means for achieving all results and the foundation of all ethics (*Arthasastra*) But critics of *anvikshiki* were not wanting since persons trained in this discipline entered into endless disputations criticized everything and promoted scepticism In some of the Hindu epics we find *anvikshiki* disparaged for these reasons which is why this science compulsory even for princes in Kautilya s day, fell into disuse

PHILOSOPHY AS A POINT OF VIEW

The term which became a substitute for *anvikshik* and has become popular is *darsana* The European word closest to it is Weltanschauung *Darsana* is a standpoint *Darsana* is also the intuition of man nature and God It was in this sense that Indians admitted the possibility of more than one *darsana* Many of the more tolerant philosophers like Jayanta (of the Nyaya school) Siddhasena (of the Jaina school) and Abhinava Gupta (of Kashmiri Saivism) had a catholicity of outlook which is surprising and sometimes bewildering This translation of a *sloka* from Abhinava Gupta will serve as an example When imagining with their intellects these say This is truth and this is truth — all that indeed is truth From you [God] there is nothing which is different This disputation of the learned is only with reference to names We see in this hymn an effort to understand a multiplicity of views as descriptions of one and the same reality which correspond and do not contradict The author is a non-dualist but this attitude is not peculiar to him

The following is a *sloka* which has been quoted with approval by Gunaratna, a Jaina 'The faith of the Buddha should be heard The faith of the Jina should be practised and the faith of the Veda should be adhered to while the Supreme Siva is to be meditated upon" This is an attitude which is based upon a feeling that reality is numinous, that its great mystery cannot be fathomed by human intellect and that *no system could be self sufficient or all-correct*

PHILOSOPHY, A QUEST FOR TRUTH

I have said that all Indian systems claim to seek and expound truth The truth which Indian philosophy is in search of is not the scientific objective truth but the truth that is living the one of which the Bible has spoken "The truth *shall free you" The scientist is often spoken of as a seeker* of truth as if that were true of the majority of the scientists Truth must be distinguished from knowledge Accumulation of facts is knowledge, whereas truth is not accumulation of anything It is entering into contact with some aspect of reality Apprehension of truth should change one's whole life and attitude We may say that truth turns a man upside *down A child who is learning his geography, for instance,* learns by packing facts into his head He takes in the names of countries, cities and rivers He is able to use them recog nize them on the map talk of them, and so on This increase in geographical knowledge does not change him It does not churn his being On the other hand, should a man return from a long journey and surprise his wife at her infidelity, it would change his attitude towards her, bring a hurricane into his life and transform his previous mode of living He is related to an aspect of reality in a new way This sort of commotion producing power is what should be properly called ' truth' A cold scientific fact like ' man evolved out of anthropoid apes" or the earth spins around the sun" is

not gripping enough to make man change his mode of life On the other hand, a subjective experience such as that we have mentioned evokes a response from the innermost recesses of a man This was the kind of truth which philosophy in India aimed at When the Vedanta asks us to meditate and realize the self and when Buddhism exhorts us to meditate on the world and realize it as sorrowful and momentary they expect us to view the world in an altogether novel way and enter into a sort of new life

ORGANICISM

In most of the philosophies of other countries we see a schism between man and nature In Indian philosophies there is no such bifurcation Indian philosophy is organicism Through the law of *karma* and the law of *rta*, Indian philosophy finds a beautiful harmony running through the whole universe Man is, as we have said, completely free and the maker of his own destiny Nature provides only the field for his activity It is a machine which is to be used by man though some men make fools of themselves and become slaves of this great machine Those who know are able to raise themselves above it and become spectators of all time and existence Those who cannot cultivate this aloofness and escape from the grinding mill of existence become helpless This organicist view of nature—a view which regards the whole cosmic drama as a not unmeaningful and chaotic play of opposing forces but as one which has a unity of theme and an aesthetic coherence—enables man to adapt himself and enter into an uncomplaining mood towards nature The Hindu sees the appalling squalor, misery and suffering in existence but he is neither awed nor benumbed He is not baffled by it and does not pronounce the universe to be absurd as Sartre has done A Hindu by himself may not be able to see the purpose clearly but an unshakable subliminal faith implanted by generations of ingrained habits of thought and deed

man's duty to his fellow men are ideas which are common to all philosophies which have been influenced by the stream of Greek and Hebrew thought Similarly, the concepts of order and progress are unquestioned presuppositions of almost all modern Western philosophies My contention is that we can isolate and describe some of the dominant traits of philosophical thought in India Not all the traits are shared to the same extent by all philosophies It is also possible that certain traits may be entirely absent in some philosophies, whereas these may in turn have traits which I have not mentioned Despite these qualifications, we can take philosophy in India as an exemplification of a certain genius, as the spiritual expression of the urges of a people with certain distinguishable characteristics

of the Indian philosophies, and Vedanta just one of the schools of Hindu philosophy and Sankara's Advaita one of the numerous schools of Vedanta As Aurobindo pointed out, Sankara's theory is 'not at all a necessary deduction from the great Vedantic authorities, the Upanisads, Brahmasutras and Gita, and was always combated by other Vedantic philosophies and religions " "It is only recently that educated India", he continues, "accepted the ideas of English and German scholars, imagined for a time Sankara's *mayavada* to be the one highest thing if not the whole of our philosophy "[3a] Although a champion of Advaita, Vivekananda stated this clearly ' Unfortunately there is the mistaken notion in modern India, that the word Vedanta has reference only to the Advaita system" "It would be wrong to confine the word Vedanta only to one system" "The Visistadvaitist has as much right to be called a Vedantist as the Advaitist" [4] Radhakrishnan asserts that the doctrine which maintains that "life is an illusion', ' the world of the senses a magic play", and ' ethical activity has no meaning", "is by no means a fair representation of the position of the Upanisads" [5] He adds that it is doubtful" whether it ' is adequate to Sankara's thought" With scholarly balance and detachment, Radhakrishnan thinks that it is difficult to decide whether the source books of Vedanta–the Upanisads–support Sankara's Advaita or Ramanuja's Visistadvaita [6] Radha krishnan also says that according to the *Brahma Sutras*, "the world is not an illusion or a dream-like structure, but a real positive something", and ' there is a strong support ' to consider that the Sutras "look upon the difference between Brahman and the individual soul as ultimate" [7] Elsewhere he asserts "Theism of the type advocated by Ramanuja—is the faith of Hinduism— It is strange that Western thinkers and critics should overlook this striking fact and persist in foisting on Hinduism as a whole the theory of abstract monism" [8] He has also pointed out that "the large majority of Hindus" adopt the different theistic systems which do not advocate the

and theologians Such a doctrine does not blur moral and material distinctions and individual differences or forms and structures

In Sankara it is not ineffable spiritual experience of the self but scriptural knowledge which holds incommensurable superiority among the means of knowledge (*pramanas*) Experience of Brahman which liberates or which is liberation can arise *only* from Upanisadic knowledge and the only final criterion of any experience which claims to be spiritual is the purport of the central texts of the Veda the Upanisads Reason (*anumana tarka*)[19] and experience (*anubhava*) are never *independently* the means for Brahman knowledge At the same time the fruit of all Upanisadic knowledge is the direct (*aparoksa*) experience of Brahman Knowledge of Brahman must culminate in experience but from independent experience no knowledge of Brahman can arise there is no question of experience confirming the Upanisads for their validity and authority are intrinsic and self evident and all experience of Brahman must finally be grounded in the Upanisads only Such is the doctrine of Sankara and his chief disciples and classical followers[20] This liberating experience or this experience that is liberation is the realization the assured conviction the knowledge that oneself is Brahman generated by Vedantic teaching[1] It is however possible that some may gain realization now because they obtained Vedantic knowledge in their previous lives but due to impeding karma could not realize it then while others may derive this knowledge from smrtis or gurus whose source and authority are of course the *srti* the Upanisads only *Vakyartham na hi rute vakyat kascit janati tattvatah* declared Sankara s disciple Suresvara (*Nais karmya Siddhi* II 4)

Having said this much about Sankara I admit that in the Upanisads and the Gita there are some passages which say that experience (or rather knowledge and perception) is the source and criterion of our spiritual knowledge but there does not

doctrine of *maya*.[8a] Radhakrishnan's own philosophy is certainly not identical with the sort of Advaita which accepts *maya vada* (doctrine of maya) in the sense of illusionism and *karma sannyasa* (renunciation of all actions after the attainment of Brahman knowledge). Tagore, his father Debendranath and Sri Aurobindo totally rejected both these dogmas. Debendranath especially was an uncompromising theist. Bankimchandra and Isvarachandra Vidyasagar hated Advaita. Tilak and Gandhi rejected *Karma sannyasa*, and so did Vivekananda more or less. Gandhi thought he was an Advaitin, but he was not certainly one in the sense in which Sankara was. Nehru was attracted towards Advaita, could intellectually appreciate it, but at the same time it frightened him.[9] R. G. Bhandarkar and B. N. Seal considered Vaisnava theism to be superior to Advaita. Das Gupta was far from being an Advaitin and considered the Dvaita logic superior to that of Advaita. Perhaps the one great modern Indian who tended towards *mayavada* in a rather complete way was Ramatirtha; at times he almost advocated subjectivism of a type found in Gaudapada and Prakasananda. It may however be said that in a way most Vedantins were Advaitins. Sankara, Ramanuja, Srikantha, Nimbarka and Vallabha were all Advaitins, but each of an entirely different sort from the others. All the Hindu sects "present a common front against Sankara".[9a] Still the principle *Tad ekam*, the ultimate is one, is acceptable to all Vedantins including Madhva, who too maintains that there is only one completely independent principle (*svatantra tattva*). If Advaita be taken to mean that God is the alpha and omega and the world is only contingently real, are not Thomas Aquinas and Al Ghazali too Advaitins? What the non-Advaitins hated most in Advaita was its doctrine of the identity of the individual soul and Brahman. "There is no fool on this earth", said Tukaram, "comparable to him who calls himself God." (*Abhanga* 2064). To repeat, leaving aside Sankara's philosophy, Hinduism itself cannot be considered to be the only authentic philosophy of India. Carvaka

Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are as much Indian as Hinduism, and since Islam and Christianity have been appropriated by Indians for centuries now, they too are authentically Indian If they came from outside India, so did Vedic religion which was brought into India from the Central Asian steppes Or, was it the North Pole or North America? And was not the Buddha a Nepali? Anyway, it is not true that even Hindu India as a whole ever desired to find in Sankara's Advaita her authentic philosophy

To come back to Lacombe, taking Sankara's to be India's authentic philosophy he says that the latter's primary and distinctive characteristic is the "incommensurable superiority it attributes to experience as compared to any other kind of knowledge"[10] He believes that Indian thought gives this place to absolute spiritual experience of the self, which is ineffable and devoid of all distinctions and differences All forms and structures are superimposed on the real India seeks to 'abolish" all concepts and verbalizations and contends that the cosmos is unreal So Indian philosophy becomes an effort to explain away the world and liberate spiritual experience from all obscurities While Indian philosophy, Lacombe concludes, grants some relative status to ordinary experience – normal mental constructions doctrinally it is indifferent to 'any distinction between factual truth and normative truth"[11] Such is what appears to Lacombe the essence of the outpouring of Indian thought"[12] Before proceeding further Lacombe's caveat that this presentation 'sacrifices" much of Indian thought must be remembered

Some of the best Indian scholars noted for their impartial meticulous research and mastery of Sanskrit have clearly shown in their English writings that in Sankara's philosophy there is no subjectivism, and that it is wrong to think of it as illusionism in the usual sense[13] It is unfortunate that their writings are ignored and greater value attached

to some European interpretations of Sankara. Except perhaps in Gaudapada, some Post-Sankara Advaitins and *some* thinkers of Vijnanavada Buddhism there are no subjective idealism and illusionism anywhere else in Indian philosophy. For Sankara, *maya* is God's power (*sakti*), a sort of nature (*svabhava*) of God, a positive principle controlled by God, but which is related to him and also conditions him. It is like the Samkhyan matter, but in Sankara's system it is emitted by God, is grounded in him and is directed by him. It is never destroyed. On the other hand, the ignorance which is responsible for the confusion between the self and the not-self and which hides the real nature of the self from itself is *avidya*. This can be *removed. God never suffers from avidya*,[14] but is always associated with *maya*, his nature.[15] The doctrine that Brahman is the world-cause does not annul the well-known distinctions like agent and action, the enjoyer and the enjoyed, the knower, the known and knowledge, for they will always be there in ordinary experience. They become unreal only for the man who *realizes* that Brahman alone is real in the sense of what endures eternally and is unsublated at any time (i e. true for all time, *trikalabadhya*). Even for *such a sage this world with all its distinctions and differences*–ethical as well as matérial–is *practically* real. Two examples may help us to understand this. For a man who knows that pots and pans are clay, they do not cease to exist for all practical purposes. Similarly, the man who knows that it is water which is in the form of the ocean, lakes, rivers and ponds, and which foams, ripples, bubbles, lashes, and runs, or remains tranquil, these distinctions do not practically vanish.[16] Such is Sankara's doctrine and he expressly rejected *subjective idalism*.[17] *The world, asserts Sankara, is not a* dream, nor is it absolutely real.[18] That the world is not ontologically and axiologically as real and as true as God is a doctrine which is found not only among the mystics, but among the several orthodox Christian and Muslim philosophers

and theologians Such a doctrine does not blur moral and material distinctions and individual differences, or forms and structures

In Sankara it is not ineffable spiritual experience of the self but scriptural knowledge which holds "incommensurable superiority" among the means of knowledge (*pramanas*) Experience of Brahman which liberates, or which is liberation, can arise *only* from Upanisadic knowledge, and the only final criterion of any experience which claims to be spiritual is the purport of the central texts of the Veda, the Upanisads Reason (*anumana, tarka*)[19] and experience (*anubhava*) are never *independently* the means for Brahman-knowledge At the same time the fruit of all Upanisadic knowledge is the direct (*aparoksa*) experience of Brahman Knowledge of Brahman must culminate in experience, but from independent experience no knowledge of Brahman can arise, there is no question of experience confirming the Upanisads, for their validity and authority are intrinsic and self-evident, and all experience of Brahman must finally be grounded in the Upanisads only Such is the doctrine of Sankara and his chief disciples and classical followers [20] This liberating experience, or this experience that is liberation, is the realization, the assured conviction, "the knowledge" that oneself is Brahman generated by Vedantic teaching [21] It is however possible that some may gain realization now because they obtained Vedantic knowledge in their previous lives, but due to impeding karma could not realize it then, while others may derive this knowledge from smrtis or gurus, whose source and authority are of course the *sruti*, the Upanisads, only *Vakyartham na hi rute vakyat kascit janati tattvatah*, declared Sankara s disciple Suresvara (*Naiskarmya Siddhi* II 4)

Having said this much about Sankara I admit that in the Upanisads and the Gita there are some passages which say that experience (or rather knowledge and perception) is the source and criterion of our spiritual knowledge, but there does not

held God to be its author Such is the classical position Lacombe overlooks all this when he says that sages exist . every generation, that their wisdom is spontaneous and th: they are the living and eternal law ** The source of all wisdo is either the sastra or God, and the criterion of all wisdo: regarding dharma and moksa is the sastra Without understan(ing the meaning of the sastra there can be no wisdom On th point classical Hindu philosophers never differed In the sourc books of Vedanta, however, it is admitted that religious exp(

* Even those philosophers who thought the Veda was *aptavakya* did nc consider it to be a finite person s work in the sense in which, e ! *Sakuntala* was Kalidasa s work, for the Veda they believed, did nc contain the beliefs or opinions of any finite person It was a uniqu work *apauruseya* in some sense Gautama considered the Veda to b inerrant and infallible, his followers believed it to be God s work S did Patanjali Kanada, according to Sankara Misra, declared it to b God s work Prasastapada stated that Dharma was manifested by God . commands or will (*Isvaracodanabhivyakta*) He nowhere said that *srt* was the composition of some sages For Kapila the Veda had no author nor was it eternal It arose spontaneously like grass in a forest ! Isvar Krsna distinguished between the *srti* and *aptas* and said that the teachin of both was *aptavacana* (Gaudapada on *Karika 5*) On the basis of the *Itihasa Purana* tradition one may add this If at all only Brahma or the divine primal sages could be considered as the authors of the Veda, they being the very first beings at the time of creation who were responsible for all further creation If they at least did not promulgate the Veda, what else could have served as the absolute criterion for dharma ? Subsequent sages had nothing to do with the composition of the Veda, they only learnt or explained it The world did not lack a knowledge of dharma till these were born. Along with the first *srsti* originated also the teaching regarding dharma Its author was either God, or Brahma the four faced or its authors were the divine primal sages none else Those who reject this position hold it to be eternal and without any author No other alternative was acceptable to the orthodox Hindu (the author of *Samkhya Sutra* excepted) For the Buddhists and Jainas, however the teachings of the Buddhas and Jinas are the living law But these omniscient beings are not born in every generation, and they attained their wisdom by conquest of *raga* and *dvesa*

rience can arise because of God's grace, or because of one's ethical and Yogic endeavour, or bhakti, in the present or past lives Anyway it is never spontaneous, and when claims to wisdom or transcendental experience are made, it is, according to Hindu tradition, by the standard of the Veda they are to be judged Otherwise what is the principle that will clinch the issue between the *bodhi* of the Buddha, the *samradhana* of Vamadeva and the *Kevala jnana* of the Jina? Only some modernistic interpreters of Hinduism ignore this and give primacy to individual experience and insights, and they justify Lacombe's comments like 'pure experience is absolutely sovereign" and "is not subject to any higher critical tribunal"[23]*

The place of scriptural authority and spiritual experience in Hindu philosophy is very high as in any other religious philosophy or philosophical theology, but it is not at all higher than it is in Christian or Islamic philosophy No experience or reason can, according to their followers, contradict the Buddha's teaching or the Jina's omniscience (*Kevala jnana*)"[23a] Even Zen experience, however personal and spontaneous it is stated to be by modern exponents, must be certified or approved only by a "master" as to its 'genuineness or orthodox character"[23b] The absolute sovereignty of pure experience or the conscience, subject to no other tribunal, is asserted only by some modernistic Hindu exponents influenced by European thinkers such as Pascal Rousseau, Kant, Schleiermacher, Tolstoy, Bergson, James and others, while the absolute sovereignty of reason is asserted by other modernistic Hindu writers influenced by European rationalism, especially, of Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley and others In view of all this, a number of contrasts pointed out by Lacombe between Western and Indian philosophy as well as between Christian and Hindu thought vanish I do not imply by this that there are no differences between the two, for there are several important ones, and I am certainly of the view that it is

* I ought to make it clear that I am neither orthodox nor a traditionalist In the above I only expounded the tradition

seem to be any passage which asserts that such experience annuls or sublates the lived reality of moral and material distinctions and differences (The universe of discourse of passages like *Neha nanasti kincana* is transcendental ontology, not empirical experience) Nor are there any clear-cut passages which are unanimously admitted to be maintaining the *nirgunatva* of an impersonal Brahman and the complete and ultimate identity of the soul and Brahman So, to say that Indian mystical experience is denuded of all diversity and difference is an over simplification It must be also emphasized that the identity of God and soul is not asserted to be true in normal experience, i e in common sense *loka vyavahara*, by any Vedantin Only from the absolute standpoint, in *paramartha*, the *Advaitins assert it It must be also pointed out* that this experience of which Vedanta speaks is not a trance, but is a luminous and clear cognition, *jnana*, as well as a conviction (*hrdaya pratyaya*) The intellect is never dulled or set aside by it, in fact a fool or a simpleton cannot gain it, for it has to be preceded by much meditation and contemplation (*manana, nididhyasana*) "[14] Finally in the Vedantic experience one "sees", one "knows" i e the cognitive element and numinous awe are balanced, the mere feeling element never predominates And what is known or seen is more often the great Person, *purusam mahantam*

To put it in a simple way in the Vedantic source books we find some passages which say that spiritual experience is primary in spiritual matters, although this has no authority in the realm of empirical experience, and as such there is no conflict between the two Hence it was there were no controversies of the sort that arose in Europe following the discoveries of Galileo, Darwin and others In the Vedantic systems (e g of Sankara Ramanuja, Madhva) in spiritual matters it is Upanisadic knowledge, not independent experience that is the supreme authority There is no contradiction between it and empirical knowledge based on perception and inference.

(according to all these masters) for their domains are different "A hundred scriptural texts cannot make a pot a cloth", says Vacaspati of the Advaita school "Perception can never be set aside by scripture, it being the primary *pramana*", says Madhva Sankara however thinks that scripture can *sublate* empirical experience, insofar as ultimate ontology is concerned because the former is infallible and more coherent, while the latter is based on *avidya* and *adhyasa*, i e confusion of the self with the not-self Some followers of Sankara go beyond this and maintain there is a contradiction between empirical experience and scriptural knowlege, and that the former is self contradictory, and some others maintain that perception confirms Advaita taught by the Upanisads because perception, they say, never apprehends individual differences and distinctions, but is always indeterminate There are other viewpoints too among post-Sankara Advaitins In the non Vedantic systems, except the Mimamsa, the importance of perception and logic is far more important than in the Vedantic systems, and in the Mimamsa while in the case of Dharma the overriding and ultimate authority is the Veda the system otherwise is thoroughly realistic, empirical and world affirmative

No classical Hindu thinker accepted the Veda including the Upanisads to be a record of the experience of sages Only the *smrtis* are based on *arsa-jnana*, or the intuitions (*pratibha jnana*) of the sages The Veda can never be modified or corrected by the wisdom of the sages in different aeons though in different generations there might be sages capable of explaining, elucidating or amplifying the meaning (*Vedartha upabrmhana*) of the Veda No sage ever added anything to the Veda, nor can any one contradict the perfect infallible truths regarding Dharma and Brahman found in the Veda Regarding other matters the Veda has nothing authoritative to say The Veda is an eternal body of knowledge having no author, according to some it is manifested at the beginning of each aeon by God as it exactly was in the previous aeons But some philosophers

held God to be its author. Such is the classical position.* Lacombe overlooks all this when he says that sages exist in every generation, that their wisdom is spontaneous and that they are the living and eternal law.[22] The source of all wisdom is either the sastra or God, and the criterion of all wisdom regarding dharma and moksa is the sastra. Without understanding the meaning of the sastra there can be no wisdom. On this point classical Hindu philosophers never differed. In the source books of Vedanta, however, it is admitted that religious expe-

* Even those philosophers who thought the Veda was *aptavakya* did not consider it to be a finite person's work in the sense in which, e g *Sakuntala* was Kalidasa's work; for the Veda, they believed, did not contain the beliefs or opinions of any finite person. It was a unique work, *apauruseya* in some sense. Gautama considered the Veda to be inerrant and infallible; his followers believed it to be God's work. So did Patanjali Kanada, according to Sankara Misra, declared it to be God's work Prasastapada stated that Dharma was manifested by God s commands or will (*Isvaracodanabhivyakta*) He nowhere said that *srti* was the composition of some sages For Kapila the Veda had no author, nor was it eternal It arose spontaneously like grass in a forest' Isvara Krsna distinguished between the *srti* and *aptas* and said that the teaching of both was *aptavacana* (Gaudapada on *Karika* 5) On the basis of the *Itihasa-Purana* tradition one may add this · If at all, only Brahma or the divine primal sages could be considered as the authors of the Veda, they being the very first beings at the time of creation, who were responsible for all further creation If they at least did not promulgate the Veda, what else could have served as the absolute criterion for dharma? Subsequent sages had nothing to do with the composition of the Veda, they only learnt or explained it The world did not lack a knowledge of dharma till these were born. Along with the first *srsti* originated also the teaching regarding dharma. Its author was either God, or Brahma the four faced or its authors were the divine primal sages, none else Those who reject this position hold it to be eternal and without any author No other alternative was acceptable to the orthodox Hindu (the author of *Samkhya Sutra* excepted) For the Buddhists and Jainas, however, the teachings of the Buddhas and Jinas are the living law But these omniscient beings are not born in every generation, and they attained their wisdom by conquest of *raga* and *dvesa*

rience can arise because of God's grace, or because of one's ethical and Yogic endeavour, or bhakti, in the present or past lives Anyway it is never spontaneous, and when claims to wisdom or transcendental experience are made, it is, according to Hindu tradition, by the standard of the Veda they are to be judged Otherwise what is the principle that will clinch the issue between the *bodhi* of the Buddha, the *samradhana* of Vamadeva and the *Kevala jnana* of the Jina? Only some modernistic interpreters of Hinduism ignore this and give primacy to individual experience and insights, and they justify Lacombe's comments like "pure experience is absolutely sovereign" and "is not subject to any higher critical tribunal"[23]*

The place of scriptural authority and spiritual experience in Hindu philosophy is very high as in any other religious philosophy or philosophical theology, but it is not at all higher than it is in Christian or Islamic philosophy No experience or reason can, according to their followers, contradict the Buddha's teaching or the Jina's omniscience (*Kevala jnana*)[23a] Even Zen experience, however personal and spontaneous it is stated to be by modern exponents, must be certified or approved only by a "master" as to its "genuineness or orthodox character"[23b] The absolute sovereignty of pure experience or the conscience, subject to no other tribunal, is asserted only by some modernistic Hindu exponents influenced by European thinkers such as Pascal, Rousseau, Kant, Schleiermacher Tolstoy Bergson James and others, while the absolute sovereignty of reason is asserted by other modernistic Hindu writers influenced by European rationalism, especially, of Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley and others In view of all this, a number of contrasts pointed out by Lacombe between Western and Indian philosophy as well as between Christian and Hindu thought vanish I do not imply by this that there are no differences between the two, for there are several important ones and I am certainly of the view that it is

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a level with the animals and other things Man is the highest of all beings either because he possesses self conscious reason, or because he is a reflection of God, or because he can triumph over nature According to Sankara, Brahman manifests itself in ever-ascending degrees of being, knowledge and bliss, rising higher and higher, from inanimate things to animate things, then to mankind and among men finally the Brahman knowers [26] In the *Viveka Cudamani* Sankara asserts at least four times that to be born as a human being is a rare achievement, and that among all sentient beings man is the highest Among human beings, the males and Brahmanas are the highest and among them those who are learned in the Veda and finally those who know and realize the difference between the self and not-self are, according to him, the cream of humanity [*] The *Bhagavata* says Rare is human birth [28] The Buddha declares It is difficult to achieve human birth and difficult to hear the true Dharma and become a Buddha [9] In every Indian philosophy man is the highest *jiva* among terrestrial beings only the celestial beings in heaven and God when these are admitted, are higher than them But which religious philosophy thinks otherwise? Even as there is a Christian centred humanism" (Lacombe), there is a Hindu as well as a Buddhist humanism, and all these differ from the humanisms of the Renaissance, the French Encyclopaedists Karl Kautsky and M N Roy So it is ridiculous to say that in Hinduism man is not the highest creature in God's creation', and that "man is only a minor part of the created world of no more importance than other created animals and things "[30] Only a naive Hindu ignorant of his tradition would believe that men are not more important than monkeys Hinduism teaches that there is a hierarchy among beings and among men too

ii

Now I want to consider some statements in Constantin

Regamey's[31] paper "The Meaning and Significance of Spirituality in Europe and India"[32] Regamey thinks that "one of the most original and distinctive features" of the Western mind is "the absolute confidence" in "the omnipotence of abstract *rational truth*"[33] *For the West reason is "the source of know-*ledge which needs no external testing at all", and "the method of attaining universally valid certitude"[34] Now I am not sure whether this is a correct representation of *all* Western thought, for it seems to ignore the differences among the correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of knowledge, and the deductive, dialectic, experimental and inductive methods Perhaps it is not also appropriate to ignore the differences among Parmenidean, Heraclitean, Platonic and Stoic rationalisms, the rationalisms of John Scotus Erigena, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and Hegel, the rationalisms of the Encyclopaedists and the Aufklarung, and it indeed seems to be a confusion not to see the gulf that separates their rationalisms from Western realisms and empiricisms of *all* types, as *well* as from pragmatism, instrumentalism, Kant's critical theory and a host of other epistemologies and logics One might have justifiably thought that in the West while in the Greco Roman Age Reason was paramount, in the Christian Middle Ages it was Revelation that was supreme, philosophy and sciences being handmaidens of theology, whereas in the Modern Age though Reason again tended to triumph (especially in the eighteenth century) ultimately sense experience and the experimental method have proved victorious And, what about the movements of scepticism, agnosticism, intuitionism and antirationalisms of all sorts, which always had a vogue in the West? However I am not now concerned with Western philosophy, but with what Regamey says about Indian philosophy

Regamey says that for India all conceptual knowledge is mediate and that the Indian sage strives" for "direct identification with fundamental reality"[35]—whatever this might mean! First of all, it is unwarranted to rely on the Indian mystics only

when considering epistemological issues It is like relying for the West only on Plotinus, Dionysius, Eckhart, Tauler, St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross Indian logicians and the schools of realism and pluralism should have been given equal if not greater importance for this purpose Secondly, no Indian sage 'strives" for identification of this sort Sankara clearly says that *jnana*, knowledge, is not the result of activity either mental or physical, as it is entirely dependent on the object and the adequate and right means of cognition The soul is eternally identical with Brahman, no striving is necessary for this, the identification Sankara speaks of has always been and is ever present The question of realizing one's identity arises only in connection with knowing oneself, on the other hand, for example, when one wants to know about the nature of crystals or about jet planes, there is no question of identification A typical empirical example of identity realization occurs when a man standing in the tenth place in a row comes to know he is the tenth There is only one transcendental example of this i e, when one comes to realize one's identity with Brahman from the absolute standpoint In neither case is there any striving In knowing things other than the self there is no possibility of identification, the self and the not self being totally different from each other like light and darkness No Indian system talks of identification of the self and the object in all knowing Some systems do not have unchanging selves and fixed objects, between which an identification could be striven for The *bhakta* may seek union with God, but this is not identification The Yoga talks of concentration on an object so that its essence is penetrated and grasped, but that is not again identification A number of Indian philosophies do not care for indescribable and incommunicable mystic experience especially of the type of identity realization Cliches like the East attains the *One* through negation of the individual and the personal",[36] and that in the East being is 'universal and undifferentiated", hold good, if at all, only about one or two Buddhist and Hindu idealistic

of God is not preserved in Indian religion When Christianity is understood in a certain way and then it is presumed that thus alone the full personality of God is preserved, all other conceptions are brushed aside as not fully preserving the integrity of the divine personality India too undoubtedly knows the Supreme Divine Person who is transcendent to every thing and who is not indeterminate and static, and a large number of Indians have always been worshipping him, believing him to be their source as well as their ideal and model imitating him and trying to become like him (*sadharmya*) so that their full potentiality is realized thereby and their destiny is fulfilled India need not learn this type of spirituality from the West, nor need Hinduism from other religions No culture, nation or religion can arrogate to itself the monopoly of either the revelation of God as Person, or of the experience of the impersonal Absolute God has many witnesses to all his truths both in the East and the West

Regamey says in India reason only leads to the threshold of the Absolute and then has to disappear By supreme insight alone is Nirguna Brahman experienced and (he thinks) there must be a 'leap' between reason and this insight This word 'leap' he borrows from Suzuki, who is stated to have said that there can be no continuous progress from *vijnana* to *prajna* but there has to be a leap between the two In the West, says Regamey, reason rises to the Absolute itself, there the rational approach is continuous and progressive till the Absolute is reached [42] Are the flesh and the spirit knowledge and faith reason revelation and *visio dei* and nature and grace accepted to be continuously progressive all qualitatively similar one leading to the other, by all Christian thinkers and mystics from Sts Paul and John to Kierkegaard and Karl Barth ? Anyway I do not want to concern myself now with Western philosophy and Zen Buddhism but only with the place of reason in Vedanta, for Regamey expressly refers to that It is difficult to know where in the Vedanta texts it is said that intuition is higher than reason"[43] and that

it is said : only through rational cognitions is Brahman known [49] The men endowed with reason know Brahman to be in all beings [50] Commenting on a *Mundaka* passage, Sankara says the mind has to be recollected and concentrated on Brahman [51] The Self, he thinks, has to be experienced (manifested?) only by mental modes [52] By *vijnana*, i e knowledge generated by the teachings of the scriptures, the preceptor, and dispassion, the wise see Brahman [53] The subtle Atman can be known only by the mind *Anuratma cetasa veditavyah* [54] The *Itareya Upanisad* declares that mind (*manas*), *vijnana*, *prajnana* and *medha* mean the same thing [55] Commenting on this, Sankara says for all kinds of apprehension, i e in all cognition, mind alone is the one instrument What is called *prajna* in the *Kausitaki*, or *manas* in the *Brhadaranyaka*, or *medha* elsewhere, is one and the same internal organ that perceives, wills and decides [56] Commenting on the *Taittiriya*, Sankara equates *prajna* and *medha* [57] Some recensions of the *Kausitaki* use *manas* and *dhi* where others use *prajna* That by which one thinks or knows is mind, reason or *prajna* (*manute anena iti mano, manute jnanakarmanah*) The reason that decides or determines the meaning of the Veda is, for Sankara, *vijnana*, which is an attribute of the inner organ, an apperception (*adhyavasaya*) of the latter [58] In the commentary on the *Mandukya* Sankara says that waking and dream states are *prajnanas,* which are the vibrations (or movements) of the mind , when these are frozen (or stilled) that state is sleep [59] These are modes of awareness which are possible only through *citta* which is characterized by *bodha* (knowledge, cognition)[60] Thus in the Upanisads there is no distinction between mind, reason, *vijnana* and *prajna* As the *Maitri Upanisad* says *vijnana* is the essence of mind which is the essence of life (6–14) All these are forms or movements of one and the same thing – reason, *buddhi* or *antahkarana* There is no gap between them The authoritative English translator of the Upanisads, R E Hume, grasped this when he translated *prajna* as intelligence, *buddhi* as intellect and *vijnana* as

understanding It is through them only that any apprehension or experience is possible The Nirguna Brahman too is known through reason generated by scriptural teaching and ethical training One need neither jump out of, nor leap up from, reason to experience Brahman Apart from reason, or by abandoning it there is no vision of Brahman The Upanisads and Sankara are clear on this point

The Gita declares that *buddhi* (reason) is greater than (or beyond) *manas* (mind), which is greater than the senses The Supreme is greater than (or beyond) reason, the Gita continues but that this is so is apprehended through reason itself *Buddheh param buddhva*[61] The Supreme Delight beyond the senses the Gita says is to be grasped by reason *Sukham atyantikam yat tat buddhi grahyam*[62] Through the Yoga of reason (*buddhiyoga*) God is attained so one should take refuge in reason[63] Aided by reason one can cast off the bonds of Karma[64] It is reason which has to remain steadfast in *samadhi* (highest awareness, a direct clear intuition of reality, but not trance)[65] Reason is that by which one knows what is duty and what is not, what is activity and what is not and lastly what are bondage and liberation It is also reason which confuses between them or totally misunderstands them[66] In the highest state of wisdom also one is endowed with pure reason[67] The Gita uses the words *prajna*, *dhih*, *manas* interchangeably as almost synonyms[68] As already said it is reason or mind which has to remain steadfast in *samadhi* in *samya* or *samatva* (equality) so that Brahman may be attained and it is in reason (and senses) that *Kama* (desire), enemy of wisdom, has its seat[69], it is reason which is confused by *moha* (delusion) and is shaken by happiness and unhappiness,[70] it is by reason again one can abandon the fruits of actions, transcend delusion and liberate oneself from *karma*[71] When reason stands unwavering (*niscala*) *samadhi* results and the supreme reality is apprehended In the resolute persons reason is one (i e has only one definite fixed goal a single aim and is concentrated) in the irresolute

there are, so to say, many reasons, endless and with many branches To sum up, when one knows clearly what one ought to want and wants that has no doubts and confusion, and has practised virtue and concentration and has achieved a poised mind (*prasanna cetas*), he attains steadfast reason by which the Supreme Reality and Bliss are grasped Such is the teaching of the Gita

So, it can be concluded that according to the basic Vedanta texts reason (*buddhi*) does lead to the highest reality whether it is the impersonal Absolute or the Transcendent Divine Person Sankara naturally agrees with them There is no question of abandoning reason and making a wild leap Texts like ' By whom can the knower be known ?" mean that the Atman being Subject never becomes an object Self knowledge is always subjective knowledge, as one's self is never comprehended as Another, as objects are [14] *Manas, citta, prajna vijnana buddhi* are just the different forms of varying degrees of luminosity of one and the same thing—reason intellect or the internal organ (*antahkarana*) It is by reason that the Supreme is attained, and in this very attainment reason is transcended Reason has to be transcended by its own help, through it It is mind that binds as well as liberates It is like a ladder by which one climbs up and finally reaches a stage where one can abide independently of it Of course Advaita Vedanta says that all this—the ladder, the climbing the attainment and the transcendence of reason—is not real from the absolute standpoint For it even the phrase experience of Brahman is not fully correct for there is no experiencing experiencer and the experienced from the absolute standpoint But this is just one school of Vedanta of the many schools, and as the above citations prove Sankara too is emphatic that it is by reason that Brahman is cognized Immediacy the saving vision *saksatkara* occurs through reason only To repeat the Absolute or God is approached through reason purified by ethical endeavour and made steadfast by the cultivation of equanimity and guided by

functions, and although Atman is beyond these all, it is through them that it is to be attained and they are to be transcended

If Madhyamika Buddhism is taken as the central philosophy of Buddhism, in Buddhism also there is no gap between reason and intuition They are moments of the same dynamic process—the dialectic of philosophical consciousness *Prajna* is knowledge devoid of distinction (*jnanam advayam*) It is "the fruition of the theoretic consciousness" [a] *Prajna* is not sensory intuition or an instinct It is the "prius of all things, 'a generic and invariable form of knowledge of which other modes of apprehension are species" It is intellectual intuition", *bodhi*, enlightenment It results from virtue (*sila*) and contemplation (*samadhi*) When the mind is freed from all impediments and concepts and becomes transparent it is non-distinct from the real That is *prajna* the Absolute itself[77] It is important to notice that T R V Murti says '*prajna* is philosophical knowledge" Thus in Buddhist philosophy too there is a continuity between the liberating intuition and the various processes of reason all of them being moments of the same movement [a]

It is true in Hindu philosophy *buddhi* or *manas* is not Atman but is not-self material Yet it is through it that Atman is seen or known *Buddhi* may be matter but may be used for purposes for which brute matter cannot be used and has a higher value than the latter A diamond may just be carbon and a human body in its composition may not differ from a pig s but the former can do what the latter cannot and have a higher value This implies that spiritual realization has to be and can be achieved only through the functioning of matter although Atman is beyond reason As the Samkhya says *prakrti* binds as well as liberates And since ethical endeavour is also necessary for liberation and as this can be only through a certain way of living dependent on the body one may also say that spiritual realization has to be achieved not only through psychological, but through biological processes too

Anyone who admits a connection between the good life and the ultimate end must also admit in this context the importance of the body and biology. Salvation through works is in a way salvation through the body. Lastly the question of realization or salvation would not arise except for beings who have bodies and minds too. It is because man is a being in space and time with a body, he wants to transcend it and be free from it and become a pure spirit, but he cannot so long as he remains a man. Thus arises spiritual tension and from it the drama of the spirit begins. The purely spiritual being is already in a state of liberation whereas for pure matter there is no question of liberation. Angels are already in communion with God enjoying salvation and for a log of wood such communion *is irrelevant. For neither of these are there any spiritual* quest and attainment.[78]

from origin to decay without being clearly recognizable as a separate static entity India has, she continues, no idea of regulating facts or of selective research, its aim is contemplation of reality, and not discrimination in a rational order In all this the author thinks Indian Philosophy stands in contrast to Western Philosophy Pointing out that *maya* as an illusion or a fiction of empirical reality is found only in Yogacara Buddhism and Sankara, she says "its importance for Indian thought has been highly overrated"[81] That the universe is a fiction and an outcome of consciousness or will—is not, she says, the central doctrine of Indian Philosophy There is some truth in many of these general comments of her

Heimann follows a peculiar method which she calls the deductive method of philological-philosophical interpretation[82] This seems to consist in taking one of the several accepted etymological meanings (or *the* etymological meaning where there is only one) of each Sanskrit technical term and developing this by drawing out its implications and making generalizations on that basis, ignoring the doctrinal differences among the several systems of philosophies which use the same terms, and the fact that the same technical term may have different meanings in different contexts in the same book, or in the writings of an author composed at different times, and that also the meaning of a term may acquire various shadings and nuances and different emphases within the same system also in the course of its development In the Vedanta texts, Atman for example, sometimes means God, sometimes the individual soul, and at other times the Absolute Maya does not have an identical meaning in Pre-Sankara writings, in Sankara and in the Bhamati and Vivarana schools of Advaita Vedanta Sometimes the meaning of a term as employed by a philosopher within his system may not be based on its etymology and its accepted meaning in the past centuries In fact a philosopher may not know

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iii

Betty Heimann's [79] *Indian and Western Philosophy* [80] has not received the attention it deserves in India Its importance does not lie in the author's thorough and accurate knowledge of Indian Philosophy – in fact this is not evident in it but in its original approach and some penetrating remarks Above all it breaks away from the usual Western stereotype of Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy, according to Betty Heimann started from a cosmic outlook a result of the country's tropical climate and geographical outlook It is characterised by an unbroken tradition of four thousand years, which is just an emanation from a few basic ideas India conceives that all things subsist side by side in space and time, and are the symbols of a hidden vital force which is one and the same in all things including man In it notions of statics dominate, but every object is dynamically passing

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the etymology and the history of the meanings at different times in different systems of a term he employs A philosopher has the right to implicitly or explicitly define terms in the way he chooses and then construct a system using them, sometimes he may not even do this, but by studying the logical placing of the terms in his system we can know what they mean Heimann does not seem to give appropriate importance to these considerations Giving overwhelming importance to etymology she ignores usage

Heimann's thesis is that in India metaphysics "has rather always been pure physics",[83] its cardinal dogma being plurality [84] According to her the reason for this is, in India direct perception through the sense organs is never questioned Whatever exists is true and good (*sat*), while whatever is perceived is real The reality of the world and the efficiency of the senses is never doubted Truth is not dependent on the rational discriminating mind As a result of these presuppositions, Indian formal logic is non abstract, is intended for practical use and is based on practical observation Inference thus is a sequence of inductions As the Indian mind is intensely interested only in the empirical and the practical, it revels in concrete observation, the Hindus being "past masters" in experimentation [85] As a consequence of this there is, she suggests an absence of abstract deduction, analysis and systematization While one may agree with some of this, the history of Indian philosophy and religion does not support the statements that Indian metaphysics is physics and that its principal tenet is pluralism A number of Indian systems do not accept the perceived reality to be true and good Many systems (e g Vedanta, Samkhya, Buddhism) expressly teach that the senses sometimes mislead and have to be corrected by reason, and that empirical knowledge must be transcended by *viveka* (rational discrimination) and knowledge based on scriptures or the intuitions of sages Except Carvaka and Pre Buddhistic materialistic systems all Indian philosophies

insist that ultimate truths about the nature of reality and the right way of life can be obtained only from the *sastras* or the intuitions of persons who achieved omniscience through spiritual discipline However Heimann s statements serve as the antithesis to the sort of image of Indian Philo sophy entertained by men like Lacombe and Regamey which is more usual Truth seems to lie in between these extreme positions It is also difficult to see how Heimann s view that there are no abstract thought and system building can be reconciled with her view that India made valuable contribu tions to metaphysics while Europe concentrated on the exact sciences[8 a] Obviously she here means real metaphysics not physics masquerading as metaphysics as she contrasts it with the exact sciences If so it must be abstract thought Also persons who know them intimately and thoroughly do not find any physics either real or camouflaged in most of the philosophical systems of India

In India Heimann theorizes God is a personification of natural phenomena or the inherent powers of animals or important inanimate things This tradition of nature gods still continues in India because she says she found a Western trained Indian scientist worshipping an animal shaped image of his god[86] From the beginning till now she thinks no regulating principle has replaced the embarrassing multitude of deities[87] Although from the Rg Vedic times there has been the conception of a deity of universal character pervading the cosmos since he is only a representative a *child* or a *servant of rta* the immanent dynamic order of cosmic manifestations this theory according to her is not monotheism but apparent monism[88] India has only Kathenotheism a time restricted monism i e a theism which attributes in turn (*Kathenos*) all cosmic and divine functions to various deities[89] In this account Heimann ignores that even from the time of the older Rg Veda the existence of the one Supreme Being the great Procreator the Father from whom all have come[89a]

was asserted She also confuses between the highest beliefs and theories of the Hindus and practices which she happened to witness or read about The fact that a modern Hindu scientist worships Ganesa or Hanuman does not prove that Hinduism is not monotheistic, or even that he is not a monotheist For example, Gandhi's veneration for the cow, or Radhakrishnan's visits to Hindu temples and his worship there, do not at all indicate that they are not monotheists Unless Hindu symbolism and the philosophy of temple worship especially as contained in the *agama sastras*, are studied gratuitous comments of this sort would continue to be made It may be that Hindu monotheism differs very much from Hebrew Catholic Christian Protestant Christian and Islamic monotheisms,[89b] but to say that any one of these alone is monotheism and the others are not, betrays provincialism In subsequent papers in this volume *rta* and its relation to God would be explained If the existence of an unchanging universal order a natural and moral law, and necessary truths detracts from the divine majesty, and if the true God of monotheism must be completely omnipotent a number of Christian and Muslim philosophers, not to speak of Greek and Chinese thinkers would have to be reeducated about monotheism

Heimann says that even in the *bhakti* religions there is no idea of *a single preeminent dominant universal personality*[90] No one who has carefully read and understood the Upanisads, the Gita, the Alwars and Nayanars the Bhagavata and the writings of Yamuna Ramanuja Madhva, Srikantha and others would agree to this Because, according to her Visnu Krsna is a combination of an atmospheric god and a cattle deity, who reincarnates in human as well as animal forms, and is thus a counterpart to man and Siva a representation of the ardent tropical power of generation' and the power of destruction Vaisnava and Saiva religions are not she argues monotheistic[91] The accuracy of this account of the origins of these religions may be doubted Besides Heimann confuses between the origins

of a conception and its developed form, and between the circumstances and the objects that evoke the religious feeling on the one hand and the refined clear formulation of a truly spiritual religion on the other hand How and in what circumstances the concept of Jehovah arose and what it meant originally and how it developed is no doubt important, but this does not in any way lessen the value of the conception of God in the greater Hebrew prophets Similarly, Christian sacrifice might have had its remote origins in what now may appear as primitive customs and superstitions, but that does not prove that the Mass, as conceived by a St Thomas or a Gilson, is not holy and purely spiritual Productive empathy, not mere philology and anthropology, helps one to understand a religion

Since she thinks that in India from the beginning matter and spirit are on the same footing, being both conceived as eternal and "divine" principles [9]' and as everything comes from matter by "seminal emission" (*srsti*), atman being inactive, she concludes that God is also inactive, and so is *deus otiosus* Karma theory puts cosmic laws above God and God though pure spirit can yet possess anthropomorphic qualities So Indian gods are, it seems, "products of the mechanical and automatic cosmic emanations" [93] *All* these statements are based on false premises and wrong conclusions No Hindu theistic system declares matter to be divine in the sense in which God is All Hindu theistic systems conceive God as active and souls too as agents and enjoyers The Samkhya system conceives souls to be inactive but it has no God That creation is due to God's will, that he is *satyasankalpa* (i e he wills what is true) is an idea basic to all theistic systems All theistic systems put God above karma, he is *Karmadhyaksa*, he secures its operation and he can also suspend its operation God is the Saviour also, he can free the souls from the bonds of karma, if they are fit for this, or out of mere compassion Some Hindu theists even believe that without any question of a soul's deserving it or not, God can shower his grace on it and redeem it That is

his *nirhetuki krpa* Mimamsa holds karma to be supreme but it has no God, and so is not relevant in this connection No Hindu system or sect which admitted God ever said that he is a product of mechanical cosmic emanations – whatever this phrase may mean [94] When not even souls who are born as men gods or animals are mechanical products, how can the Supreme Spirit unborn, eternal and changeless, be a mechanical product? I think perhaps Heimann harbours in her mind a rigid abstract rationalistic deism, entertaining it as the only truly monotheistic conception, and condemns actual historical religion and true living monotheism as not being spiritual and monotheistic Some contemporaries of Hooker and Berkeley similarly castigated Christianity and ran after the mirage of a natural and rational religion divorced from history and life

Heimann thinks that Indian philosophy is neither idealism nor materialism In her opinion as a unique, original eternal, active spiritual principle is ruled out, it is not idealism, whereas it is not materialism for both matter and spirit together are active at the beginning and the end of the universe, and everything and every world will continue beyond this empirical existence This is an incorrect view In Vedanta Brahman is the one unique spiritual principle which is the world-cause Except in Advaita, in the other schools of Vedanta Brahman is active In Madhva's school also Brahman is the one *independent* ultimate principle All these may be idealisms, or may not be, depending upon the definition of idealism Any "ism" may be defined in such a way that to some systems of philosophy that term does not apply It is usually accepted that most forms of Vedanta, and Vijnanavada and Sunyavada of Buddhism are different kinds of idealisms [95] One also fails to see how Carvaka and some Pre Buddhistic philosophies fail to be materialisms [96]

Heimann's habit of talking about the whole of Indian Philosophy as an integral unity and characterizing it as just "this" or "that" is as fundamentally wrong as would be talking

about the whole of European Philosophy in a similar way Indian Philosophy is a world in itself comprising a number of mutually contradictory idealisms, realisms, materialisms, agnosticisms, theisms and atheisms Except with a number of qualifications and exceptions it is difficult to assert any proposition about Indian Philosophy as a whole

On etymological grounds Heimann takes *maya* to mean the capacity to measure In the Veda, some gods have the power to assume any shape, and in the Gita by *maya* Krsna "divides" himself into many, i e makes himself many in every possible shape So, she argues, all things are *mayas*, or measurable definite things, while that from which they come is the primeval chaotic everproducing mass (*avyakta*) As all things have a beginning and an end, and are emanations of the indefinite chaotic mass, they are smaller and so lesser in value than it This exposition of Heimann is neither Vedanta, nor Samkhya One wonders how Brahman or Krsna comes to be equated with chaotic indeterminate mass Earlier in this paper I had occasion to indicate in brief Sankara's concept of *maya* In the theistic systems it is conceived as the wonderful creative power of God There is no *maya* in classical Samkhya nor do all things come from the Avyakta according to Samkhya, for souls are eternal spiritual entities , only material things come from matter and only in its primordial state it is unmanifest, or as she calls it "indefinite"

It is interesting that the famous Sanskritist R G Bhandarkar thinks that *prakrti* of Samkhya is not "matter in the ordinary sense" and that Kapila's system is idealism The absolute ego is *purusa*, *ahamkara* is the finite ego, its products the non-ego, and what limits the ego is *mahat* *Prakrti*, of which *buddhi*, *ahamkara* and *manas* are the immediate products cannot be an external object in the ordinary sense, especially as states of awareness like pleasure, compassion, etc , are forms of *buddhi* or *manas* It is ultimately the principle that limits the

free ego, and is itself finite Thus Bhandarkar explains Samkhya with the help of Fichte's terminology and says that while Fichte derives the limitation of the ego from its own essence, Kapila derives it from a distinct cause separate but in association with it He thinks Fichte's is "a perfectly subjective idealism", while Samkhya is an objective idealism! *Ahamkara* is prior to all knowledge and its objects So he thinks the external world is in both philosophies derived from states of consciousness [96a] I doubt whether *purusa* can be appropriately called *the* absolute ego, for Samkhya clearly maintains that there is a plurality of *purusas (Karika 18)* But Bhandarkar's point whether *prakrti* is just matter deserves attention Its products are mental states which are prior to cognition and its union with the souls is necessary to bring forth results In *Itihasa-Puranas* and Pancaratra, *Avyakta*, *Buddhi* etc , are personified and identified with deities, from whom everything originates Some identify *prakrti* with *maya*, the divine creative power So *prakrti*, it is argued, is not matter, and Samkhya is idealism This seems to imply that as only "like can produce like", what is transformed into *buddhi*, *manas* etc must be a "mental substance", but then can one who accepts this maintain that all material things are just products of *buddhi* and *ahamkara*, which are not themselves taken to be material? Besides, Samkhya even Bhandarkar admits, posits *purusas* and something distinct from them If *purusa* is spirit, *parkrti* must be non spirit, and both being equally eternal and ultimate, it is difficult to describe Samkhya as idealism *Purusa* with *ahamkara* is the individual person, and *purusa* as such is just consciousness without activity and attributes Fichte's ego is pure activity, and classical Samkhya has nothing like his one *Ichheit*, or what in his later period he called God, pure Being, the ground and prototype of it Some forms of Vedanta (e g Prakasananda's) and Vijnanavada may *perhaps* be usefully compared to Fichte's philosophy, but not Samkhya It is strange that while Heimann reduces Samkhya to some sort of materialism, a great Indologist tries to

understand it as idealism It is however possible that early Samkhya was materialistic while later Samkhya was theistic, whereas I have been talking about classical Samkhya

In the theistic systems and Advaita Vedanta too while Brahman is conceived as the source of everything, he is not indefinite but infinite, and a pure spiritual person or reality How precisely he is the source remains as much a mystery as the Christian dogma which conceives God creating everything out of nothing Advaita says Brahman became many only apparently, some theistic systems maintain Brahman brought forth everything out of himself without undergoing any essential change at all, while others say God by his will makes matter transform and develop itself into the world of things, for providing an opportunity to eternal souls to enjoy, work, know, and win salvation In Samkhya, souls being passive, matter of itself becomes the world and again relapses into its primordial form for the enjoyment of souls or to put it in another way, for binding and liberating souls In neither Vedanta nor Samkhya is indefinite matter more valued than individual things, just because it is their prius, indefinite and vast In fact these systems were not so silly as to suppose that for example, jugs are lesser in value than clay or necklaces than solid gold of which they are made Of course they would admit that clayness' or 'goldness' is primary and more enduring than the pot–and necklace forms (*rupa* or *akrti*) But they are not greater in value The spirit is the one thing higher in value than matter, whether manifested or unmanifested Heimann constructs a sort of syncretistic philosophy of her own out of some arbitrarily selected Vedanta and Samkhya ideas interpreted in her own way and talks about it That is neither Indian Philosophy, nor any one of the Indian systems

According to Heimann, nirvana, sunya and Brahman mean one and the same thing the Indefinite If so one wonders why Buddhists and Vedantins quarrelled with each other so furiously

It is, she says, a *no-thing*, *the limitless immeasurable* reservoir of all things, from which all things emanate and in which all merge It is the one spiritual and material background of the universe. It is what is experienced as "this no-form" or indefinite being in dreamless sleep[97] It is, she declares eternal matter in its stage of indefinite emptiness containing an urge to self-manifestation, from which all things emanate[98] This is again a chimera of her own. No Buddhist and certainly no Vedantin or Samkhya would accept it as even a remotely correct representation of his system. No Buddhist accepts an eternal world-ground and cause; no Indian philosopher thought that one and the same thing can be both spiritual and material; and beyond sleep is the *turya* state. She confounds this confusion when she adds that God is one of the many apprehensible forms of this supreme principle, matter, and that Upanisads and Vedanta do not distinguish between matter and spirit.[99] One is amazed by these baseless statements for in all Vedantic systems the preliminary step on the spiritual path is discrimination (*viveka*) between the self and the body, the not-self. In Samkhya and other systems too this is the foundation of liberation. This *viveka* has to be succeeded by the realization of the true nature of the self, viz., whether it is one only and identical with the Absolute, or just one of the many spiritual monads which are not presided over by any higher spirit, or whether it is a personality that can enter into communion with God About the true nature of the self there is no unanimity, but *all* Hindu systems are unanimous that the soul is not matter (not-self like the body) and has not come out of matter.

Since in her view Indian materialism conceives the world as repeatedly formed and dissolved, and teaches the emanation, transformation and merging of all empirical forms into one another and finally into a trans-empirical static shapelessness, Heimann calls it transcendental materialism.[100] The Buddhist and Vedantic doctrines of *maya* also teach, according to her,

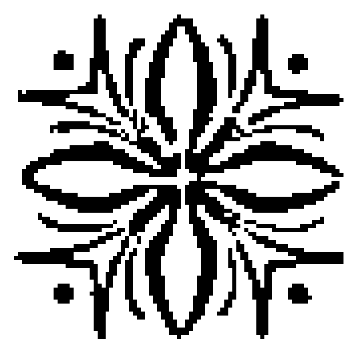
that all things emanate from and merge in eternal matter and they, she says, recognize no discriminative spiritual principle Things, she continues, not being eternal definite and total like the formless indefiniteness out of which they have come, are not as real as it is This is *maya*, a transcendental, but not empirical, illusion This last point which Heimann makes about *maya* theory is more or less correct about Advaita Vedanta, i e according to Sankara the world is not empirically unreal but is so only transcendentally To put it in other words, from the standpoint of one who has realized Brahman as the one absolute reality, this world is not as real as Brahman Brahman in Vedanta, is pure Spirit Being and Bliss and is the one sole source of all that is In other Hindu systems the souls are spiritual principles i e wholly non material entities, which are ultimate According to all Hindu systems the distinction between soul and body, spirit and matter, is the foundation of liberating knowledge Buddhism and Jainism also are not materialisms for neither maintains that eternal matter is the basic ultimate reality Only Carvakas and some Pre Buddhistic philosophers like Ajita Kesakambalin were materialists Some of the medical schools of ancient India and perhaps some religious' sects (Kapalikas ?) were materialistic

It is fantastic that a hotchpotch of ideas taken from Samkhya Vedanta and Buddhism should be concocted and called *Indian Philosophy*, branded as transcendental materialism, and then declared as unique and not at all like any philoso phical system in the West In fact Betty Heimann's *Indian Philosophy* is not like any philosophy of India or the West It is *sui generis* and belongs to only individual imagination But once again it must be said that while her comments on Indian sciences like geography, astronomy, etc do not show greater acquaintance and profundity than those of Macaulay, some of her comments on *mayavada*, Indian logic, and the practical and experimental bias inherent in the Indian mind are illuminating Her interesting and original way of interpreting Indian Philosophy

fact of life in India", he claims, "is the Eternal Being of God"[111] "Throughout the history of Indian thought—the true home of the spirit has been haunting the Indian race"[112] 'The thinkers of India are the inheritors of the great tradition of faith in reason"[113] With loyalty to the spirit of past tradition, philosophy must progress by being relevant to the present, based on facts now known to us, on our experience and reflection and must attempt to solve our problems and fulfil our needs Such are Radhakrishnan's views on India's past philosophical heritage and the present task It may be seen that both these thinkers are virtually in agreement with each other

By and large for whatever reasons philosophy in India has been religious, for the contributions of Carvakas and others when compared to those of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina thinkers are negligible In fact one may with some justification say we have had in India no philosophy of the type found in Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke Kant, Hegel, Dewey, and others like them, but only of the type found in the Pre-Socratics, Socrates and Plato, the Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages Pascal, Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Gilson, and others of that sort Most of our philosophy has been tied up with religion, and ensues in a world view useful for life Most of our philosophy is philosophical theology, ethics based on eternal authority or intuitions of omniscient sages, transcendental ontology, or speculative psychology But within these limits we have had every type of doctrine Mayavada or monism intuitionism or idealism do not exhaust its types We have had monotheisms of all kinds pluralisms, monisms, idealisms and realisms of various shades absolutistic, theistic as well as atheistic Some of these have parallels in the West and other Eastern countries It is a folly to claim that India has had a monopoly of spirituality or mysticism, for history does not show that spirituality has always been the leading motive" of India's inner and outer life. A "naively vulgar native Western egocentric prejudice", "the nemesis of an act of hybris' (Toynbee's words) claims that

ANNEXE TO CHAPTER SIX



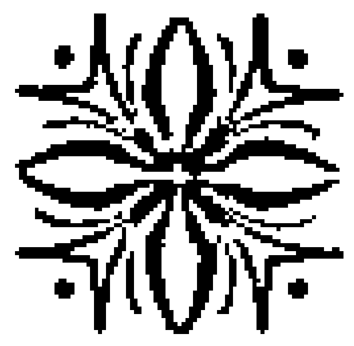
'Leaps' in Vedanta and Buddhism

Karl Potter's *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Prentice-Hall, New York, 1963) has just come to my hands It is a scholarly and original book and Potter is one of the few Orientalists who have critically and impartially understood many of the intricacies and technicalities of Indian Philosophy He has a chapter on "Leap Philosophies" In view of the importance of this book, I would like to add a brief treatment of this chapter

Potter defines leap philosophy as the theory that nothing is ever caused, born or created, so when we become free (*mukta*) nothing happens * Since to be free is to realize that there is

*Precisely for this reason I should have thought Advaita cannot be a leap philosophy as leaping is generally understood What or who leaps and from where to where, or from what to what? When something novel dis continuous occurs, or emerges, there may be a leap Thus *arambhavada* might be a leap philosophy in the sense something new emerges into exis tence How can *satkaryavada* support leaping? If nothing ever happens leaping also does not happen

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only the Hebrew and Christian religions have had exclusive and final revelations unto salvation from the true and living God, and that Europe alone has the monopoly of rationality, the scientific attitude and true humanism which respects the individual person. A similar Indian prejudice claims that India had been (or is) more spiritual than the rest of the world, that it "lives naturally by a spiritual influx from above", and that its philosophy and culture are far superior to those of the other

only Brahman and that oneself is Brahman, and as this is bliss and peace, there will be for the Brahman-knower no fears, doubts, or problems This is Advaita doctrine accepted by all its followers Suresvara, whom Potter takes as a typical leap philosopher, says that the saving word "that thou art" is meaningful only to him who has distinguished between the Self and the not self and has developed discrimination After "improving the reasoning process" through negative dialectic one must develop discrimination and then when this great Upanisadic truth is heard one gets the liberating insight I do not understand why Potter calls this a "leap" to complete freedom (p 243) To repeat what I said elsewhere, a mathematician may read all the relevant literature and struggle with a problem for months, and may not solve it, but he may hit upon it in a flash with seeming suddenness when he is bathing, or taking an evening walk, or attending a dance Can we appropriately say he leapt to it and all that he consciously did previously went in vain? Was it really sudden and uncaused? A man formed by a long study of the classics may suddenly begin to write poetry different from and even opposed to the classics and yet it is related to it for without such preparation and study, his poetry would not have been what it is If Hegel had not studied Kant as deeply as he did, if Ryle had not taken the Ancient Greats course and studied Aristotle so well, their philosophies would have been different from what they are The Buddha spent years questing for enlightenment in fasts austerities, vigil, meditation, and following older ascetics but did not succeed, but one day when he gave up all this consciously, was well fed and at ease, he had the great insight Can we therefore say all his previous training, effort and struggle was profitless? Is there no relation between this final liberating insight and all that? Adopting the words of Leo Tolstoy we can say every creative insight and scientific discovery begins from the beginning and is born only of itself but is not unrelated to the past

As Potter says in expounding Prakasananda the man who

wakes up has no dream (p 245) and no sleep too any more, but can the fact that he previously slept and dreamt be denied? 'To wake up' has no meaning unless one was previously dreaming or asleep *Jnana* arises only when there is *jijnasa saksatkara* is preceded by *sravana manana* and *nididhyasana* These are needed because there is *avidya* Of course for one who has reached the highest stage, the steps become irrelevant, nay, possibly, non existent, one who has climbed up may kick away the ladder and forget all about it That is a different story For the Brahman knower, nothing but the One exists, neither Veda nor reasoning *Yatra Veda aveda bhavanti* But that is only from the transcendental standpoint From the standpoint of philosophy logic and commonsense the effort and struggle preceding an insight are real What I think Suresvara and Prakasananda maintain is there is no progress *in* the final culminating insight (*saksatkara*) there is no development of it and no perfecting it, but there is a progress *towards* such an insight One who is seated on the Everest does not and cannot reclimb it or climb further, he is already on the summit *arudha* but there must be an ascent to reach that point beyond which there is no climbing The *aruruksu* is a reality albeit empirical In science it is otherwise There one never completely and finally solves a problem and no scientific problem is *the* ultimate problem in that sphere there are and will be always further peaks to be scaled and ravines to be crossed In *Brahmajnana* one knows That after knowing which nothing else or more is to be known Perfect knowledge no doubt is produced by hearing the great Vedanta texts if it is at all produced but it is not always produced in all as soon as they hear Although a *mahavakya* may be its principal cause (*karana*) it has its own *conditio sine qua non* such as purity, dispassion and a burning desire for liberation as well as discrimination of the eternal from the non-eternal In *Naiskarmya Siddhi* Suresvara alludes to the case of Janaka who accidentally while strolling in his garden overheard Brahman-discussion conducted by some

Brahmavadins grasped the truth at once and was forthwith liberated Similarly he mentions a *pisaca* (*spirit or ghost*) which had its abode in Arjuna's chariot flag overheard the teaching of the Gita and was forthwith liberated *Vakyasravanamatracca pisacakavadavapnuyat* (II 6) In both cases this happened because their minds were pure and they were prepared by previous spiritual discipline in their present or past lives and they participated in *Brahma vicara* (discussion) by hearing it Brahman knowledge – liberation – does not come like a bolt from the blue in a spasmodic irrational way but when it is obtained it is had in all its perfection As *moksa* is *brahmajnana* or *anubhava* and as it is eternal and immutable there are it is true no degrees in the liberating vision No further progress would then be possible for the ultimate goal is reached Whatever may be the ontological differences among the Advaitins in this matter they are unanimous Does the empirical world exist for one who is liberated or is it just utterly destroyed? If it exists what is its status and relation to the Absolute? That is a different problem and Advaitins give different answers to it And here what Potter says about Suresvara and Prakasananda is correct but that does not concern us now I only wish to emphasize there is no *brahmajnana* without *brahmavicara* May be in absolute reality neither happens in fact nothing happens only Brahman is But that also cannot be asserted for there is no assertor and assertion Silence!

Potter I am glad confirms my position that for Nagarjuna reason is the prime means of attaining freedom and that *prajna* is developed through a rational procedure (p 238) But I am puzzled when he talks of an unexplained leap from dialectic to insight When according to Nagarjuna there is nothing at all to be explained as Potter knows (p 241) why should he take pains to explain the phenomenon of *prajna*? *Prajna* is not mere emotion or feeling but is the result of a kind of *dhyana* or dialectic There is no leap or somersault from thought (*conscious and unconscious*) to the conclusions of

thinking and in a certain kind of thinking the conclusion carries with it both certainty and certitude so unshakable that one is convinced one has arrived at the final truth itself Knowledge then becomes a strong conviction a clear vision a firm faith *drdha pratyaya* It brings with it fulfilment peace and joy Progress in it or after it becomes inconceivable When one has the intuition of the Absolute when one has an insight into the Void or when Deity has revealed himself *unto liberation tasmin drste paravare* in what way and towards what can one still progress ? One progresses only till one obtains it Once again we are not at the moment concerned with the relation between *samvrtti* and *prajna* or between *samsara* and *nirvana* Different Buddhist schools have different theories about this If *samvrtti* and *samsara* are just chimeras which do not at all exist to talk of a leap is unjustified One cannot leap from what is just not into what is At the most one may spin round and discover one has always been in reality but cannot jump So *samsara* is itself *nirvana* That is one view On the other hand if both these exist in some way there can be a transition a going into an ascent or a progress from the one to the other but after one has reached the other Shore that is the End and there is no more any progress That the two exist but that there is a gulf between the two that no connection no bridge at all exists between the two and that therefore one should make a headlong irrational jump without any prepara tion or training — this no Buddhist maintains Dialectic and meditation are advocated as means to freedom by all Buddhists that is *all* I am concerned to emphasize now

Prajna may not be like empirical knowledge but it is won by dialectic mainly negative and spiritual discipline — that is the Madhyamika faith in general Negative reasoning they say establishes that nothing but *sunya* is real The Buddha s enlightenment as well as that of other Bodhisattvas positively guarantees that What the Buddha experienced we can also experience if we follow his path Some Buddhists however think

that *prajna* is somewhat like higher empirical truth that there are positive arguments which can give at least an assurance or an inkling—if not a demonstration—of the Reality experienced through *prajna* It is also not necessary that through right and real arguments alone can the Real be reached "It is possible to use bad reasoning to prove true propositions , as Potter says following Nagarjuna (p 240) The *adhyaropa-apavada* method of Advaita also does the same

Coming to Hindu theistic philosophies neither Visistadvaita nor Dvaita says that there is an insurmountable barrier between nature and grace In both Deity is an indwelling one though also fully transcendent We know this only by the study of scriptures and reasoning, convinced of this we have to make ourselves worthy of receiving God s grace by discipline and worship When we will have it we cannot say, and without it we cannot be liberated But God makes no indiscriminate election', he never forgets man s karma his deserts conversion, and his efforts He is equally compassionate to all but he sunders the karma bonds of his devotees and a devotee cannot but become a *dharmatma* (a virtuous soul) however sinful he may have been previously That is the teaching of the Gita and the Vaisnava teachers

To surrender ourselves entirely to God is what we ought to do but to become aware of him scriptural study and meditation—so use of reason—are necessary One school of Visistadvaita says that after fully abandoning himself to God with the conviction that he will certainly save us and that he alone can do so nothing more has to be done by man The rest is God s work The other school says that human effort must co-operate with God s grace continuously till the very end Anyway we do not have in either school the kind of theology found in Kierkegaard or Karl Barth Saving faith and loving adoration of God are luminously rational in these schools of Vaisnavism Reason and philosophy are not spurned and looked upon with

contempt by any of the great Vedantic schools In them we have no faith by virtue of the absurd, and no possibility of the revelation of God to stocks and stones Only rational beings can adore God and be granted a vision of him Grace and revelation are not events like a brick falling from above all of a sudden into a placid pool For one who has no faith in God, does not call upon him to save and does not sincerely experience compunction and conversion, he has nothing to grant The bhakta alone is entitled to salvation and bhakti is ripened knowledge of God, born out of the awareness of God's majesty, the soul s nature and the relationship between the two God's grace is 'generated' by the knowledge arising out of *jijnasa* (study and meditation) *Bhaktirupapannam jnanam*, as Ramanuja puts it *Jnanasya bhaktibhagatvat bhaktir jnanam Jijnasothajna najat Tatprasadadeva mucyate* declares Madhva (*Anuvyakhyana*) And this knowledge is the result of human effort ethical discipline, study and meditation It is also certain that to a true bhakta, liberation though God's gift is never denied To a good and loving son his patrimony is not denied by his father Such is the Vaisnava position as it clearly comes out in the works of Ramanuja and Madhva

I am not therefore sure that these can be called leap philosophers in the sense they deny human agency and freedom (Potter, Ibid , p 247) Generally non Advaitic Vedanta and theistic Nyaya maintain that since souls are beginningless and since the world is also beginningless they have been bound in *samsara* due to their own beginningless ignorance and karma God is only responsible for providing the souls an opportunity to experience the appropriate fruits of their own past actions act afresh win knowledge and obtain bhakti and liberation as well Let us now pay some special attention to Madhva Bondage is of the nature of ignorance (*pramada*) he too admits (*Sutra bhasya* 1 1 17) Ignorance is caused by one s own nature and God s nature being veiled (*acchada*) by *maya* or *prakrti* God's inscrutable wondrous power (Madhva *Bhagavata*

Tatparya, X 81 13) This is a doctrine found in the *Prasthana Traya*, and accepted by Sankara also *from the empirical standpoint* Bondage though real is not permanent and can be removed only by God's grace, which in turn is generated by one's knowledge arising out of *jijnasa* The soul is a real and free agent on earth as well as in liberation Otherwise, it cannot be held responsible, *karma* and *samsara* would have no meaning, and the precepts of *sastras* would also have no sense Madhva is clear on this point (*Sutra bhasya* II 3 33 ff) He, of course, adds that the soul s capacity to act comes ultimately from God (Ibid, I 3 4)

Thus bondage and liberation too are *ultimately* dependent upon God, but not independent of man's karma [*Mattah smrtih jnanam apohanam ca*, and *Isvarah bhramayan sarva bhutani yentrarudhani mayaya*, says Gita *Tatohi asya bandhaviparyayau*, *Brahmasutra*, III 2 4] In all theistic systems the soul s imperfection and involvement in this world, in sin and evil, is either willed or permitted by God *Esah eva asadhukarma karayati*, as an Upanisad says In some religions even the existence of souls is willed by God, he always knew how they were going to live and behave He could have made them other than what they are, or not created them at all Anyway it is he who thrusts them into, or allows them to enter into, the phenomenal world of time, space and causality—of evil and sin He alone could lift them out of it and save them But as long as man is in this world—in whatever way he may have come into it—he has many alternative ways of doing things or not doing and so is responsible for them What he does matters to himself and to the world for he is a real being But he is not of course, *entirely* the maker of his own destiny God has to be reckoned with The Lord binds (keeps in ignorance) the sinful souls only, and it is he who liberates (Ramanuja *Sutra bhasya*, III 2 5) *In a general way this is Vaisnava and Saiva theism* But Madhva emphasizes that since karma and ignorance are material, and cannot act by themselves *and as nothing can happen without*

religious philosophy is leap philosophy and fatalism

Lastly, I come to a vexed problem in Madhva s philosophy touched upon in passing by Potter Madhva sometimes talks of God being the cause of the existence of souls their being parts of him though they are different from him Perhaps by this he means no more than that they absolutely depend on him He also talks about some souls ' fit for darkness (*tamoyogya*) others who for ever are fit to repeatedly experience life and death interspersed by periods of stay in heaven and hell and finally those who are fit for liberation The first are fit for everlasting hell and the last for everlasting bliss and freedom This fitness or unfit ness depends on the dominance of one or the other of the three *gunas sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas* Those who are fit for everlasting hell are demoniac beings solely in the grip of *tamas* The lowest type of men—those who have no impulse for a higher life spiritu ality and virtue and no aspiration at all for liberation and fellow ship with God–come under this category God never consigns any one (Madhva too admits) to hell or heaven in an arbitrary way nor does he liberate anyone arbitrarily In view of the *karma* and *guna* of the souls he gives them what they deserve But he is completely independent to do so and in view of his omni potence and transcendence he could do otherwise if he willed Theoretically all is possible for him his power is *aghatanagha tanapatiyasi* but inasmuch as he has no partiality or enmity towards anyone and is full of compassion he elects souls for liberation on the basis of their fitness only Madhva makes this clear in his *sutrabhasya* when discussing *vaisamyanairghrnya*— the problem of evil He is also emphatic that souls are real doers and enjoyers though they owe their being to God Every-thing is contingent except God but everything is also real and free to some extent Whoever feels an urge for the spiritual life whoever longs for liberation can be certain that he has no demoniac impulse and that he will not go to perdition One s own faith and effort can guarantee and realize liberation *Deo Volente*

I do not see anything more monstrous or cruel in this doctrine of Madhva than in the other Eastern and Western religious systems Everlasting hell is no more repugnant than beginningless *avidya* and its corcomitant senseless *samsara* Actually, Madhva's hell as well as liberation which are relevant for us, are not eternal, but only endless, both have a beginning inasmuch as life on earth is real and on its basis is one judged and granted liberation, or hell for ever or temporarily We are not concerned with his demonology and angelolory, and so with those beings who are eternally in perdition or in liberation The very fact we are living on earth shows we are not in eternal hell, and also that we are not enjoying eternal freedom If we have faith and hope and obtain knowledge by *jijnasa*, grace will descend on us and we will be liberated Is it just that there should be angels and devils—beings who eternally enjoy beatitude and beings who eternally suffer alienation from the Divine—while there are also men and other earthly creatures who have to qualify themselves to be given one of these two kinds of existence? Why does not the compassionate, omnipotent God will and realize that all souls shall be fit for eternal felicity? No satisfactory theodicy has yet been developed by any religion But Madhva s system does not endanger human freedom and responsibility and God's justice and compassion any more than the other religious systems His religion is one of freedom joy and hope ' Trust and worship the Lord, do your own duty and enjov this world —that is his message (*Dvadasastotra*) (For a passionate but the best discussion of this problem see p 173–4 & 643 ff in R Naga Raja Sarma *Reign of Realism in Indian Philosophy* Madras, 1937 Two other good books on Madhva are K Narain, *An Outline of Madhva Philosophy* Allahabad 196? B N K Sharma, *Madhva's Teachings In His Own Words* Bombay, 1961)

CHAPTER SEVEN



Religion and Ethical Practices: The Hindu View

I will confine myself in this paper to a brief discussion of the nature of the relationship between religion and ethics in Hindu culture

i

The word in Sanskrit which is equivalent to virtue and duty is *Dharma* [1] It also means justice and also the common law and conventions the privileges and obligations that belong to a man as a man and by virtue of his being a member of a particular society (each society being organized on different principles, and even the same society differently at different times)[2] Dharma is the counterpart in the moral sphere of *Rta*, the cosmic order or the law of the universe, which is unswervable and on account of which nature is uniform and well regulated The Jewish concept TSEDAKA, which means a law of nature as well as human charity and benevolence is similar to the concept of Dharma. The

Greek word which means convention, religion and ethics, has also some similarity to Dharma Dharma like the Jewish *Mischpat* (unwritten law) was always there, scriptures only express it It is eternal Dharma is that which unifies and sustains the world *Ius* used by the Romans and derived from a root which means 'to bind' has the same meaning *Boni mores* or precepts of convention and morality express the *Ius*, but for which society would come to its doom

Dharma results in happiness here and hereafter[3] This is an assumption of all Hindu thinkers Only the virtuous deserve to be happy, the unhappy are people who have defied Dharma Since Dharma is the counterpart of Rta, like the latter it expresses the nature of the universe and he who does not practise Dharma is out of tune with the universe His suffering is a result of his sin — his attempt to deviate from the cosmic law Thus Dharma is something indispensable if a man wants to be whole in body and spirit, and if he wants to be happy Non dharma leads to chaos and resultant misery

In the Vedas morality is thought of as an expression of divine law Rta has its source in God's will Blessed shall be the mortal O Mitra, who serves thee according to thy law " That is a good which the gods approve "[4] As a later book put it the Absolute or God is the supreme Dharma.[5] The supreme Self is free from all evil (*apahata papma*) he is pure (*subhra*), truth and virtue[6] His world is free from evil, evil persons turn away from him He who does not abstain from bad conduct (*duscarita*) cannot attain God[8] The perfect saint is he who burns evil away and is free from it[9] In consequence of this conception, it is laid down that since God is all seeing one must avoid sin, fearing God Disease and suffering are sent by God as punishments for man's violations of Dharma

Quite early in its history, Hindu thought developed a great belief in the principle of causality and in a

strictly law governed universe If the universe is inexorably ruled by a law such that only virtuous actions result in happiness and immoral actions in unhappiness and if it also be granted that no event can go in vain without giving rise to commensurate effects those human actions which seem to produce no visible effects should be capable of so doing in the lives to come while our present happiness and unhappiness must be due to our own actions in this and previous lives To think that our present happiness and unhappiness are arbitrary is to admit that the universe is not ruled by a rational moral law to think that our present actions will go without effects is to disbelieve in the causal law in the moral realm whereas to think that our actions in this short life will have once for all everlasting effects in an eternal after life with no chance ever again to undo our evil is to make the effect highly disproportionate to the cause Such in brief is the logic behind the Hindu theory of rebirth It is as is evident based on two further assumptions (1) The soul is eternal entitative and is connected to the body as an occupant to the house in which he lives (2) The soul has been making its entrances into and exits out of bodies from eternity the process will come to a stop only when there is no more necessity for it to indwell in a body This involves the belief that actions done by an embodied soul can in some way influence it so that after death it enjoys or suffers in other worlds in proportion to the effects of its actions and by their momentum is also born again Thus each new birth is an opportunity to enjoy and suffer in accordance with the residuary accumulated effects of past actions and to seek out ways of escaping from further births or from further unhappy births as one wants

It is interesting to notice in this connection that for the most part Hindu thinkers are not bothered by the problem of free will The idea of freedom is itself derived from reflection on human will so if the will is not assumed

one of the oldest law books says the Veda is the source of our knowledge of Dharma *the recollections and actions of the* knowers of the Veda are also it adds further sources[10] The entire Veda is infinite many parts of it are yet unknown and some of it has been forgotten by most men But some great sages may have had access to these parts and not have forgot ten *Their recollections* therefore deserve respect and some times their teaching *and actions may not fit in with the pattern* of Dharma as we know it In such cases we must presume that their statements and actions are in conformity with the por tions of the Veda which are not known to us unless these expressly contradict the Veda as we definitely know it In *addition to these Manu adds another criterion of Dharma* The conduct of good men and one s own satisfaction (consci ence) when performing it[13] But these have to be taken into consideration only insofar as they do not go against express Vedic passages

In the light of all this Dharma may now be redefined as the desirable types of actions indicated by Vedic injunctions[14] Dharma being what it is there can be no propositions about it and no demonstrations of it for there can be propositions about facts and existent things only *There can be only injunc tions command sentences* about Dharma and this is what the Veda contains Science and history need not be taught by scripture Man s experience and reason can construct them but ethics is neither science nor *history* It can be either mere *opinion or superstition or knowledge not* based on experience and logic if such were possible Hindu thinkers believe that the Veda gives such knowledge While the Mimamsakas maintain that the essential Veda consists of command sentences only *others say that it does consist of proposi tions* also but not about empirical facts Knowledge of *Brahman* the Absolute or *God – is also (the latter say)* given by the Veda for Brahman is neither demonstrable nor percep tible One school of *theists (Naiyayikas) however* thinks

with the nature of the universe, and to flout which would be unnatural and sinful and would result in unhappiness, we can see how close in spirit is this philosophy to Confucianism and Taoism Virtue is indispensable because it is natural and traditional, not to practise it would result in sundering oneself from the cosmic harmony, in alienating oneself from the physical and social environment and to some extent in being responsible for wrecking society—and so, the order of the universe An ethics of this sort is humanistic, pragmatic, organicist and non-religious, if religion be defined as belief in God or at least a supreme Absolute Spirit

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Insofar as the universe is rational and ethically determined, a man's birth must be also determined ethically This means that the social and economic situation into which a man is born and the occupation for which he finds himself fit are those which he deserves because of what he did in previous lives and in the present life The unexhausted fruits of his actions in previous lives and his actions in his present life will determine the future life of an individual The inequality, misery and evil in this world are thus understandable, and as this world is an eternal wheel of recurrent births and deaths, in which the eternal order itself and the souls[16] are non temporal realities the question why a soul was ever born does not arise This theory that a man's nature and course of life and his self-development are effected by his past actions and his mental evolution and that merely material factors such as his heredity and environment are of subordinate importance became the basis of the *caturvarnya* (the system of four castes) as it was supposed to exist in its ideal purity In the *Purusa sukta* and the Bhagavad Gita it is this ideal social order that is described Thus in the light of the theory of Karma an intelligible social structure was conceived

the variety, complexity and potentiality of human nature and societal changes, and was influenced by a naive conception of socio economic order, befitting to a people who lived in a pastoral and monarchic society The scheme of the scriptures is as follows Self control and spiritual wisdom are the qualities that express the Brahmana character, heroism, leadership and firm will the Ksatriya character, Vaisya character finds its natural expression in agriculture and commerce, in the various arts and crafts, and that of Sudra in manual labour of all types All people, so the Hindu scriptures laid down, belong to one of these types, and they ought all to conform to their respective innate characters

Early in the history of Hindu social organization, these four types were linked up with four recognizably distinct socio-economic functions in the then existing state of society These were that of the priest and spiritual preceptor, of the ruler, warrior and administrator, of the merchant, peasant and craftsman, and lastly of the labourer and servant Society was sought to be stabilized into four distinct classes on these lines, and since it was difficult to determine one's *svabhava* on spiritual grounds it came to be determined by outward circumstances Birth and capacity were at first supposed to indicate whether one was a Brahmana or a Ksatriya and so on but gradually selfishness and stratification set in rigid customs set aside the needs of individual natures and birth alone came to determine one s caste For some time at least environment and scrupulous care to train a child in conformity with his supposed *svabhava* compensated for the degradation of the original spiritual ideal In the end, however, the hereditary principle alone triumphed and the caste system which still survives in deliquescence based on hereditary specialization, hierarchic organization and a mutual exclusion of castes through compulsory prohibition of interdining and intermarriages, came into vogue Irrespective of one's inclinations and capacities one was compelled to follow the profession of one's

father and forefathers Attempts to gain a higher social scale or a change of one's *hereditary occupation* became *sinful* Occupational stability was related to one's possibility of salvation Blood mixtures, the degradation that ensued from change of occupation, the need to find a place for tribes and peoples of other cultures coming into the Hindu fold, and the invention of new crafts and ways of life led to the formation of innumerable castes The caste system that has been existing now for centuries in no way corresponds to the *caturvarnya* described by the scriptures, it is almost a caricature of the spiritual ideal which once inspired the classification of all men into four types, *based on their qualities and work, as determined by their svabhavas*

The basis for this actual caste system is not the scriptures or Hindu religion, but only custom and the *dharma sastras* (the Hindu law books), many of which assumed pseudo sacred character in the middle ages, as they claimed to be based on the remembrance (*smrti*) of the Veda unknown to any but the authors of those law books These law books productions of priestly classes, equated the actual caste system with the *caturvarnya* scheme, but they were forced to put some of the castes *outside the four archetypal castes of the scriptures and developed* the obnoxious theory of the untouchability of certain castes In these books the Brahmana by birth was usually placed at the top of the social hierarchy, though this was far from realized in India before the Muslim conquest In ancient India actually the princes, governors of provinces, great merchant princes and generals formed the top caste and after them came the great teachers, scholars and the wise men then came the artisans and craftsmen Last came the men who toiled at manual labour [18] The power of the theory of Brahmanical supremacy to tame people was first discovered by the patrimonial Hindu kingdoms Especially after mutual wars and conquests, victorious parties used Brahmana priests to legitimize their interests Brahmana and princely power combined whenever the urban classes, the

artisan guilds and commercial classes tended to become powerful, while these latter classes supported by great merchants and princes thwarted the aspirations of priestly classes In the emergence and development of Mauryan, Sunga and Gupta dynastic powers, and in the rise, spread and fall of Jainism and Buddhism, we see these factors at work Repeated foreign invasions broke down the power of knightly classes and urban citizenry, while priestly classes retained their position, as the conquerors hardly bothered to suppress a class which for them did not symbolize a rival secular power, and which provided them with a means of social control As usual, the conquered people found a refuge in a social order organized and directed by priestly power based on allegedly immemorial custom and sacrosanct law books which assumed the character of divine ordinances through false claims of being productions of sages to whom truth was revealed at the beginning of creation Also, priestly power to some extent domesticated the conquerors and gradually assimilated them into Hindu society The Central Asian tribes which in the Punjab and Rajputana became converted into Ksatriyas and became founders of many Rajput princely houses bear witness to this After the Muslim conquest the situation was further aggravated Following the customs of the early Khalifs, Muslim rulers in India in general allowed their subjects to follow their own customs On the other hand, the Hindu kingdoms of medieval India usually allied themselves with Brahmana orthodoxy and priestly claims to uphold the caste system that came into existence, because therein lay the safety of their own vested interests and the preservation of what they thought was Hinduism Revivalistic movements and the keen desire to defend one's own culture, mores and social structure supposed to be based on one's religion against foreign religions with alien ideas and customs allowed the caste system to stratify more and more in Muslim and British India Viveka-nanda seems to have been the first thinker who discovered that the existing caste system was not a religious institution, but only

a social institution The political unity of Independent India with the principle of authority located in an elected parliament based on universal adult franchise is slowly destroying the institution of caste based on privilege and inequality, with no regrets left in any but the citadels of orthodoxy and obscurantism, who cannot distinguish between the fundamentals of a religion and a culture, and the accretions that accumulate round them during the centuries, which unless destroyed tend to obscure and ultimately kill the original

This caste system was responsible for two developments, both of which were alien to Hinduism *Firstly*, as each caste became a distinct status group which specialized in a particular occupation, it developed its own ethics with its own customs, rule of law, training and family ideals The conception of a universally valid ethics almost died Each caste had its own rights, but men as men did not have any rights An organicist social ethics of this sort prevented the rise of ideas of 'human rights' and social criticism As a character in the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi, lamented at one place in it the origins of eternal law have dried up and one can no more identify it, positive law is doubtful and changing, there is no justice, power only reigns [10] *Secondly*, since occupational stability was linked up with soteriological interests and as change of occupation was considered to be degrading and sinful, the caste system developed in people an aversion to better their chances in life and engage in social welfare and reconstruction, and this rendered Hindu society incapable of giving birth to revolutions – economic, political or technical Since the existing caste system was supposed to be divinely ordained, there were no efforts towards institutional reconstruction and the belief that through suffering for one's past sins one made oneself pure and created possibilities for future happiness, prevented people from seeking means of social redress The losing of the importance of universal ethics reinforced by the idea that each status group and sect had its own ethics along with the conception that every

way of life and action was valid in its own way for those who practised it, led to unlimited toleration Absurd creeds and shocking ways of doing things were allowed to continue and develop within the Hindu fold This and the lack of a principle of authority (such as a Church always and the state after foreign conquests), which could give social direction, resulted in social anarchy None of the existing social practices or institutions are accepted and practised universally by all Hindus and they never were This is because they all grew up haphazardly at different times in different parts of the Indian sub continent under differing circumstances, by incorporating primitive local customs, or through superstition deliberate mischief of upper classes, or the ingenuity of commentators who interpreted law books in different ways Inasmuch as all these are neither directly based on fundamental Hindu sources (the *srti*), nor derived from them, and since many of them contradict the spirit of Hindu religion, a far-reaching social reconstruction, such as the abolition of the caste system untouchability etc , will purge Hinduism of the many undesirable elements which it was forced to acquire due to many political and social vicissitudes during its long history (The Hindu Code promulgated by the government of independent India was an attempt in this direction)

The *varna* theory as found in the Hindu scriptures emphasizes only the point that a man's life and work ought to be a free expression of his being, of his essential character A man's duties, his functions and his course of action should be determined by his own inner spiritual and ethical necessities and possibilities but not by considerations of prestige economic success, comfort and merely reasons of the state and society Duty should flow from one's own essential nature and qualities then only does it become one s duty (*svadharma*) A man who performs *svadharma* in this way is spiritually perfecting himself, while he who acts contrary to this is violating his own nature and the law of his being This does not mean that a

man is naturally born to an occupation, nor does it mean that it is the law of one's own nature to be a tailor if one is the son of a tailor, or a robber if the son of a robber [20] It is one's own qualities, capacities and needs that should determine one's duty and occupation in life The Hindu scriptures are only interested in emphasizing this spiritual truth It was, of course, supposed by them that broadly speaking human nature is distinguishable into four types, according to which the way of life and occupation one has to adopt can be deduced But the basic Hindu scriptures nowhere say that it is birth which ought to determine to which type one belongs and which way of life one should lead While, as has been commented above, the division of all men into these four types is too broad and far from exhaustive, and so defective the law books and later tradition took it as eternal and universal and made birth its basis *It is my point that Hindu scriptures did not interest* themselves in the problem as to which type of social order will be most congenial to the realization of this spiritual truth It is true that some great Hindu sages and law givers sincerely believed that an empirical social order which would be based on the division of society into four occupational groups based on temperaments and characters of human beings perpetuated on the principle that a man's birth itself would sufficiently indicate his character and true destiny would be the ideal social order This was a naive belief as was proved by the necessity to recognize hundreds of castes and a travesty of the spiritual truth which was the purport of the teaching of the scriptures Thanks to the caste system a man's parents and his society imposed upon him an occupation a rule of life and a round of duties and responsibilities neglect of which resulted in his degradation and imperilling his chances of salvation also This monstrous system made men into machines depriving them *of free choice and thwarting the gifts and capacities of thousands* in each generation by not allowing them to develop the highest characteristic perfection of their own essential natures

Hindu scriptures nowhere speak of this world as merely a place of suffering, or as illusory and as something to flee away from Asceticism and renunciation are not made by them indispensable to salvation, nor are they regarded the highest means available This-worldly interests and overwhelming valuation of the goods obtainable on earth dominate the scriptures "[1] To rise higher and higher, to make ceaseless efforts to advance oneself materially (health, family felicity, wealth and social position) and spiritually, and to be ever wakeful in seeing that one remains prosperous and righteous are the duties of man "[2] The man in adverse circumstances had the obligation to work for his own ethical as well as material redemption and lift himself up, both by his own efforts and prayers to God "[3] The scriptures taught men to wish pray and work for social concord the health and happiness of the whole community and political self-rule "[4] The ideology of world-negation, of indifference to material welfare and the idea that one should be content with one's lot, however poor, miserable and lowly it is is foreign to Hindu scriptures That one is born poor or is in adverse circumstances is no doubt, they would say, the result of his Karma, but neither the Karma theory nor the other tenets of Hinduism enjoin upon a man not to counteract the effects of his past Karma by present actions and nullify them as far as possible Through hard work, intelligence, true repentance and prayers to God one can uplift himself both in this life and the next life in the material as well as the ethical sense Occupational mobility and free choice of such work which is in accord with one's *svabhava* are encouraged by Hindu scriptures In all these matters one's own spiritual necessity and the legitimate desire for the good life on earth limited only by ethical considerations[25], ought to be the governing factors

While the caste system gave rise to a number of different ethical codes applicable to different hereditary social groups and did not emphasize universal ethics applicable to all men as men, the scriptures laid emphasis on the latter The laws of the

gods, as the *Rg Veda* said, are the same for all men and have to be kept scrupulously, and the gods will gladly help men to keep them The Lord of creation is the Father of all men, his commands are the laws which men ought to follow, for he is the "first born of the Right Order' which rules this universe"[6] This implies that ethical rules are those which express the Righteousness that governs the world By an examination of the conduct of those who are "competent to judge, apt and devoted, but not harsh lovers of virtue" and by knowing what the wise men have praised, one knows what is right and what is wrong[27] Speaking truth, filial piety, respect towards gods and teachers, hospitality, and practice of Dharma are universal virtues often praised by scriptures Hard work (*tapas*) self-restraint and serenity are cardinal virtues[28] The Dharma sastras mention non injury, veracity, non stealing purity and sense restraint as the five important universal virtues All these have three dimensions i e in thought, word and deed It was however left to the Gita to bring all virtues under one concept, *Jnana*, wisdom Humility, unpretentiousness non-injury, forgiveness, straight-forwardness, respect of the spiritual teacher, cleanliness, steadiness, self control, non attraction by objects of senses, freedom from egoism, awareness of the evil of suffering due to birth death, old age and disease, non attachment, not to identify oneself with son wife, house etc, constant equanimity whether what one desires happens or not unswerving devotion to God for its own sake, retreat to solitude not taking pleasure in crowds constancy in the knowledge of the self and intuition of the object of true knowledge—this is wisdom, that which is other than this is ignorance[29] This is the ethical ideal of the Hindus, except that atheistic Hindu thinkers would delete 'devotion to God' from this descriptive definition The man who realizes this expresses it in his conduct, the chief characteristics of which would be good will towards all beings friendliness and compassion (*Advesta sarvabhutanam maitrah karuna eva ca*)[30] As the Ramayana puts it, such a man

situations not speaking truth may be more conducive to the realization of the ethical ideal than otherwise The conclusion, therefore, is, there is no uniform conduct conducive to the welfare of all at all times, adoption of one course of action may look inferior to another, and the latter may be in conflict with another justifiable course of action[32] Time, the prevalent culture and the place—in short, the context, ought to determine one's conduct[33]

In general Hinduism lays emphasis on two criteria for taking ethical decisions *Firstly*, one should not even contemplate adopting courses of action which will affect others in such a way that one would not like them if one were in that position[34] In other words, a pattern of action must be self-consistent and capable of being universalized for application at least in possible similar situations, involving other persons and perhaps even oneself *Secondly*, it is the quality of the intention, the internal character which provides the impulse for action, that ought to determine the morality or otherwise of an action[35] The outer nature of an action and the ends attained by it do not indicate its moral worth It is the nature of the will and the motives that impart a moral or immoral tone to actions These when translated into more concrete terms would mean that the ethical ideal will be realized by performing what one sincerely feels is his duty in a particular context without being influenced by considerations of possible advantage to himself (what the Gita calls non attachment to fruits of actions) *One* way of deciding whether this is so or not is to see how far an action benefits the maximum possible number of people (*bhuyohitam*), but this ought not to be either the important or the only way of deciding Another useful criterion is to examine how far an action contributes to the stabilization and harmony of the established order in familial, social national and international spheres, for Dharma is that which sustains the world[36] Again this ought not to be the sole criterion for in some situations disruption, revolution and inevitable uprooting may be ethically justifiable

recognizes that it must be the individual person who can in each case decide what is his duty Each moral decision must be a personal responsibility, a free choice in accordance with the law of one's being The ethical value of actions is dependent on the quality of this decision—the moment of the will behind them, the intentional tone To be solely dictated by the Vedic rule and the routine of daily conduct and social duties is not to be completely ethical The source of the movement of our actions should be within ourselves, ethics should be rooted in subjectivity and not in some static mechanical rule of action The core of the teaching based on the immemorial ethical experience of one's own tradition ('scripture', *srti*) should be imbibed and appropriated in such a way that it becomes not an outward imposition but an infusion that contributes to our spiritual development, liberation and ethical insight, and then we should seek to realize the moral ideals our insight reveals by an understanding of our own nature and freedom and the time, place and circumstances in which we have to operate Action has thus to be founded on knowledge and intelligence—it must be *buddhiyoga*, as the Gita puts it, and its principle must not be external, but internal, based on one's capacities and spiritual needs Hinduism while thus recognizing man's freedom and the necessity for true ethics being personal, admits the truth that the ethical and spiritual capacities and qualifications of men—hence their needs—are unequal Hence ethical laws and ways of realizing moral ideals have to be tempered by particular contexts and personal factors for it is only persons in unique situations that have to be and can be ethical

iv

All Hindu philosophers admit the existence of the soul, but conceive it in different ways some that it is a substance, which is not itself consciousness, but which can become the

substrate of cognition, activity and experience (Naiyayikas and Prabhakara Mimamsakas), others that it is the principle of self-consciousness itself (Samkhyas, Bhatta Mimamsakas and Advaita Vedantins) Some consider it to be in its essential nature free from all suffering and sin, while others think that it is of the nature of bliss and holy All of them are agreed upon the following points The soul is neither the body, nor the mind and the senses All these latter are material The soul is eternal It as such is free from suffering and sin, but due to inhabitation in the body and association with the mind and senses, it thinks, acts and experiences This experience is intermittently pleasant, but on the whole it is not so, for much of life is made up of failure to get what one wants and meeting with what one wants to avoid So to achieve liberation for the soul from the limitations of body and mind, by making it unnecessary for it to be born, is salvation The soul's involvement in the process of births and deaths is beginningless, but can have an end when it attains salvation This involvement is caused by desire—the desire to act, experience and enjoy This desire is rooted in ignorance,[39] absence of the knowledge of the real nature of the soul and true felicity When one knows the true nature of the soul and wherein salvation consists, one will not have desire any more, and the annihilation of desire results in escaping from the round of births and deaths Absence of desire founded on right knowledge (*tattvajnana*) is thus the means of salvation

Evil, in Hinduism, is not the creation of an anti God and our destiny is dependent on ourselves, for he who develops *tattvajnana* can obtain salvation Hindu theistic thinkers of course, interpret *tattvajnana* as knowledge of God and oneself involving loving adoration of him and dependence on his grace, while Absolutistic idealists interpret it as the knowledge of the identity of the Absolute which is Spirit and Bliss and the individual soul

Since knowledge is acknowledged to be the means of salvation and salvation is freedom from rebirth in all Hindu philosophies, and since, according to karma theory, every action, good and bad, must have its resultant effects, which cannot go in vain, and one must be reborn to enjoy these effects if all of them are not experienced in the present life, and since obviously one cannot do so because of the infinite number of lives one led and the millions of actions one did in them, further problems arise How can one at all free oneself from the operation of karma? How is salvational knowledge related to ethical action? And what is the relation of ethical action to salvation?

Hindu thinkers could not accept salvation as something to be created for a soul by God, or as something brought into existence by the actions of the soul itself A produced thing or condition being contingent must have an end, and so impermanent An impermanent salvation cannot be true salvation Hence salvation can only be a restoration of the soul to its true state, or a recognition by the soul of its real nature, and, some would add of its relationship with God Since salvation is not something that has to be now produced by anyone s actions, but has always been so to say, available, actions are of no avail for salvation Moreover, as salvation is freedom from rebirths and experience of happiness and unhappiness and as all activity whether moral or not will result in happiness or unhappiness actions of any type are directly irrelevant to salvation Works cannot lead us to liberation, even if they are good works The consequences of this Hindu conclusion have often been described as the devaluation of work of worldly and ethical activity

Hinduism has given rise to three alternate doctrines and corresponding ways in an attempt to solve this problem The origins of all the three of them can be traced back to the scriptures and the oldest books of Hindus

(1) The first way was the one formulated by the strict

Vedists—Jaimini and the Mimamsakas The duty of man is to perform the obligatory actions enjoined upon man by the Veda These include the cultivation of universal virtues such as non-injury and truth-speaking and the performance of *nitya karmas*, i e, daily duties such as morning and evening prayers and meditations (*sandhya*), and *naimittika karmas*, i e occasional duties, such as performance of particular sacrifices or rites on full moon days in each month Non performance of these results in sin *pratyavaya* If a man realizes the temporality of the world and the impermanence of worldly goods, he need not perform actions intended to secure this-worldly or other-worldly benefits, such as wealth and heaven In other words, he avoids doing everything else except fulfilling the obligations imposed by the Veda and the society of which he is a member He never does what is forbidden by the Veda This enables one not to accumulate any more *apurva* Obviously the presupposition was that performance of actions which come to us as duties because they are duties does not lead to any involvement in the ethical compensatory mechanism of karma, and bacause such a man does not do anything for the sake of himself, he cannot commit any sin On the other hand, he exhausts the effects of his previously accumulated karma by experiencing them and expiating for them Such a person if he has also a true knowledge of the soul equipoise and sense control attains salvation

(2) Since actions cannot give salvation, the wise man realizes their futility and abandons them This-worldly life is for the unawakened, but the wise renounce it and go to the forests for renunciation alone can lead one to liberation This is the doctrine we find in some of the early but not major Upanisads, like *Jabala* and *Kaivalya*[40] Some major Upanisads like the *Brhadaranyaka* inform us that some wise men who did not like to lead a worldly life renounced it and became solitaries, but they do not say that it is the invariable course open to wise men[41] The rationale of abandoning

this-worldly life is based on this argument what has one to do with family and career, with occupation and wealth, when one wants only self-realization leading to liberation? So such a one follows the way of mendicants.[40] The wise man who has obtained gnosis and a certitude of his salvation obtains bliss in this world itself and is unconcerned with anything that happens here The gnosis, according to Samkhya, is of the form that one is pure spirit, in itself devoid of all qualities, actionless, immutable and entirely aloof and isolated (*kevala*) from matter, its unfoldment and working All that happens is the movement of matter, that the soul acts and that it is suffering and enjoying, that it is bound by karma and has to be liberated is a delusion He who realizes this is saved here and now In opposition to this Samkhya theory, Advaita Vedanta maintains that gnosis ought to be the conviction that one is identical with the Absolute which is spirit and bliss and that embodiment, activity and experience of pleasure and pain are not real, because the Absolute is actionless immutable and devoid of all attributes Gnosis thus frees one on either view from all accumulated and also possible karma and *samsara* (transmigration) and he who realizes himself to be pure spirit, which has nothing to do with the body or other souls, finds no reason to act and lead a life in this world Besides, he knows he cannot act as he is actionless So the wise men abandon all action, they live by begging for the minimum food necessary to keep them alive or they dwell in forests living on fruits and leaves.[40a] But even such a great advocate of this way as Sankara admits that there could be no objection if even wise men continue to act in this world.[41] He is emphatic only on two points that action even if ethical, cannot in any sense be considered as the principal and direct means of liberation, and that for one who has obtained true knowledge *there can be no obligations and duties,*[41] *religious or social* He attains actionlessness (*naiskarmya*) whether he seems to act or not, for his gnosis has redeemed him from bondage,

and normally such a man remains without action outwardly also Thus in these systems of thought liberation is complete emancipation from this as well as the other world once and for ever

But even these systems admitted that ethical action is necessary for the purification of mind without which knowledge unto salvation cannot arise All bondage is undoubtedly due to wrong knowledge (*viparyaya*) but this according to Samkhya includes egoism desire hatred and fear [45] Without the practice of virtue and Yoga the performance of unselfish activities and the cultivation of unattachment (*vairagya*) one cannot rediscover one s true nature and get rid of *viparyaya* and the delusion based on it According to Advaita Vedanta also actions should not be given up until the rise of gnosis [46] Further ethical action is absolutely necessary to bring about the purification of mind True knowledge cannot arise without undertaking an inquiry into the nature of the Absolute based on scriptural texts and one is incapable of such an inquiry till one has developed virtue and equipoise sense control detachment from worldly things concern with eternal things and desire for liberation [4] Ethics thus is the foundation on which true knowledge can be built [4] and to avoid misunderstanding it must be stated that the liberated man can never be anti social though he may be asocial and if at all he chooses to act his actions will be ethical only and for the good of the world This is repeatedly stated by *all* thinkers belonging to these schools

mind—*punya* or merit—which are helpful to obtaining liberation (3) As every man is born with three obligations—to his ancestors, the gods and the sages-(see below), which if not discharged constitute an obstacle to liberation, ethics fulfils them (4) Performance of duties helps one to discipline one's mind and develop concentration, without which one cannot understand and meditate on truth, which is necessary for liberation To conclude, Samkhya and Advaita Vedanta while insisting that true knowledge alone is the one and sufficient cause (*karana*) of liberation, emphasize that this would not arise without the practice of virtue, but grant that after emancipation one is not obliged to act for there will be no motivation for involvement and conduct in the world

(3) Right from early times a third way has been also inculcated by Hinduism In ancient books such as the *Isa Upanisad*, in the *Brhadaranyaka* passages describing the life of king Janaka in the *Manusmrti*,[48] in the *Grhya Sutras*[49] and above all in the Gita, we find this advocated Man, this doctrine says, is born with three obligations [5] He is obliged to his ancestors who in a way gave rise to his very being, and he discharges his debt to them by keeping up the continuity of the family line The ancestors are immortal as long as their blood throbs in the veins of their successors, so he who sunders the continuity of progeny is ungrateful to his ancestors and incurs sin [1] Next, man is indebted to the gods keepers of the divine law, the cosmic order and the moral law, but for whom there would be neither rain nor sunshine, nor righteousness in this world Our existence well being and happiness here and hereafter are dependent upon them they are all gods gifts the gods sustain us * And we on our part, through faith reverence and sacrifices have to show our gratitude to the gods—have to foster them as

*Vedanta teaches that the several gods are the aspects and personified powers of the one God whose particularized names and forms embody the aspirations and needs of the faithful

the Gita says He who does not live a life of faith, prayer and sacrifice lives a life of sin So all work has to be performed in the spirit of sacrifice unto the gods, all life activity thereby becomes a sacrament Work not so consecrated is accursed and one who eats without leading a sacramental life 'eats sin' (*aghesi*) [52] Lastly, man is indebted to the sages who have either discovered the nature of Reality and Dharma and taught them to mankind, or through whom have been revealed and transmitted the truths regarding Reality and Dharma But for these sages one would not know what is virtue and what is vice and the truths unto salvation Not to study and meditate (*svadhyaya*) on the writings in which are to be found the teachings of these sages is to be ungrateful to them who have laboured so much for the good of mankind Further, not to do *svadhyaya* is to deprive oneself of the means of knowing the nature of Dharma and Reality and thus to lose the chances of both happiness (which depends on Dharma) and salvation Thus through marriage and begetting of children, through sacrifice and *svadhyaya*, one discharges his debts and destroys one's sins He who wants to be a celibate or an ascetic and neglects sacrifice and *svadhyaya* is spiritually ruined [53] So sacrifice and *svadhyaya* have to be simultaneously carried on [54] To the question will not such activity entangle one in further karma, the reply is that action as such does not bind a soul to the wheel of *samsara*, it is the quality of action—the motive and the spirit behind it—that binds Sacramental actions are liberating, and not binding, provided they are done in a spirit of duty for its own sake, and not for one's prosperity and happiness [55] So this doctrine holds that even the wise ought to continue acts of sacrifice, charity and askesis, without attachment to their fruits.[56]

Another paramount consideration urged upon us by this doctrine is the inevitable necessity of action for man It is impossible for man to be actionless, for living itself is an activity, and even mendicancy and sitting still in a cave or a forest are

activities On the contrary, if it is said that the soul is actionless, it indeed is so whether empirical man acts or not Even when man acts, it is in reality matter—body, mind and senses—which is at work Actionlessness is therefore realized by knowing this truth and by rising to a free serenity and poise, witnessing the operations of matter but not imagining to be involved in them This freedom from action is achieved not by leading a vegetative life of just eating, digesting and sitting immobile, for even then the senses and mind are at work, but by understanding the true nature of the soul By detachment (*anasakti*) and inward renunciation of the fruits of actions, one realizes actionlessness Actionlessness in other words means action in this world which is free from the rule of karma Thus since it is possible to act with freedom from the operation of karma by inward spiritual resignation and detachment, wise men continue to lead a normal life in the world, without trying to achieve the impossible, namely, actionlessness, after which ascetics hanker to escape involvement in the karma chain The theists add that such liberating action should in addition be infused by love (*bhakti*) of God, and duties should be performed as acts of self-surrender to God, who is the source of all being and Master of all action

One final argument which protagonists of this doctrine urge in support of its superiority is that *loka-sangraha* or *loka-paramarsa* ought to be an ideal for the wise man who is liberated [58] To contribute towards the preservation of the cosmic and social orders, to make them well-regulated and to promote the good of all beings is *loka-sangraha* This concept can however be used by all The theists say that as God himself is engaged in *loka-sangraha*, the wise man ought to act in imitation of God and co-operate in divine activity Absolute idealists argue that as the one Self is in all beings, and as all beings are in the Self, to work for the welfare of all beings is one's duty, while pluralists can advance the plea that inasmuch as an individual belongs to the republic of spirits—the common world of

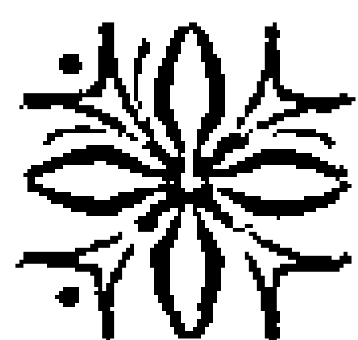
purusas—the wise man knows his being kin to other spirits and ought to work for their happiness as well as liberation

The difference between the first and the third of the above three views is that advocates of the first hold that only through expiation and experience past karma is annihilated, while the third maintains that true knowledge or God's grace annihilates all karma (*ksiyante ca asya karmani tasmin drste paravare*, *jnanagnih sarva karmani bhasmasat kurute*) According to the first view both knowledge and action are equally necessary for liberation, the obligation to action is founded on Vedic injunctions regarding duties which must be performed whether one wants material gains or not The third view lays down only knowledge as primarily necessary for salvation (admitting that it is to be preceded by ethical action), but is concerned with the further question, what the wise man ought to do? It answers that to be active for the sake of the welfare of the world is better than to be inactive The wise man is ethical not because he is commanded to be so by the Veda, but because to be ethical and wise is the higher and more spiritual way There is a variant of this view found in the Nyaya-Vaisesika and some schools of Vedanta (e g Ramanuja) According to them mere knowledge does not result in liberation, it has to be combined with dispassion, which is obtained by performing obligatory duties disinterestedly Dispassion, the Nyaya says, along with knowledge leads to liberation, while for Ramanuja, dispassion helps man to have knowledge of God which culminates in *bhakti* and a *bhakta* is not inactive but subdues his will to God's will and acts as a divine instrument for fulfilling such purposes which the Divine will intended by creating the world and making him live in a particular context in world history Mere realization of one's true nature is not final liberation which consists in realizing one's relationship with God and adoring him Worship of God and working for others' welfare with love and good will towards all are the activities in which *ekantika* (undeviating monotheistic) *bhaktas* engage themselves The hopes for a millennium

the *Mahabharata* says at one place rest on the possibility of the world being filled with such men[69] Action thus comes to be invested with a holy value

The enigma of human action of the difficulty of simultaneously living in this world a full and active life and abiding in spirit truth and holiness is thus solved by Hinduism Of these the doctrine that maintains a contradiction (*badha*) between freedom and *samsara* between the inactivity immutability and holiness of the one spirit and the activity change and evil of the world of plurality solves the problem by cutting the gordian knot by teaching that one ought to abandon life in the world and activity as unreal and irrelevant as soon as one obtains gnosis and attains to the plenitude of truth and bliss (But see footnote above) It must be remembered that this is only one way of solving the problem of the relationship between salvation and action and then too is rather a drastic solution as the difficulties involved in action are sought to be removed by abandoning action The third way that of making action a means to true knowledge and later of founding action on inner inactivity on the silence of the soul on internal renunciation based on a true understanding of the worth of things so that all action is transformed into a liberating outflowing of the being of a free soul for the sake of the whole universe has received the assent of many major thinkers of Hinduism in the past and it is this doctrine which has the largest number of supporters at the present time Such action of the free spirits—*muktasya karma*—is for the sake of the material and spiritual redemption of all other spirits It may be pointed out that the relevance of these last two ways arises only when one has had the saving gnosis and until then duties are indispensable but even according to Advaita Vedanta while a *jnani* transcends ethics he cannot and ought not to violate it No great Advaitin ever violated *sadacara*

CHAPTER EIGHT



Ethics and Politics in Hindu Culture

i

In the previous paper I discussed the importance of the Vedic conception of *Rta* as the foundation of the Hindu moral theories Along with *Rta* we find in the *Rgveda* another concept that of '*Svadha*' This means either nature or conformity to nature *Svadha* is implicitly present in things and is responsible for their development Whether it is a living being an inanimate thing or god – each has its own *Svadha* It was from this conception that another doctrine was evolved in course of time viz to remain in the position in which one finds himself is natural as well as appropriate As was said in the previous paper, it is this theory which underlies the caste system

Rta is unswerving and inexorable As was said by Vama deva it is *Rta* which provides various types of food that sustain meditation on *Rta* removes transgressions praise of *Rta* opens our ears and awakens us to moral consciousness [1] While the foundations of *Rta* are firm it has varied and fair forms which

present themselves as duties to be performed[2] Thus *Rta* is the principle which makes the world a universe and a cosmos But it is realized in various ways – through the performance of different duties at different times

The rules ordained for specific purposes which are variable and by which are guided the conducts of men are derived from *Rta* The *Veda* calls them *vratas* and due performance of *vrata* constitutes justice The Veda recognized that *Rta* has both ethico-rational and material dimensions Thus it is both natural as well as moral law And its off shoot, *vrata*, is in conformity with divine reason and is meant for human welfare When the Veda says that it is *Rta* which makes the rivers flow for fertilizing the earth and makes the fire burn for giving warmth, the natural law is meant On the other hand, when it is said that intelligent men can know it, that the prudent can attain it by striving and that all children are potentially containers of *Rta*, it is moral law that is meant[3]

Svadha and *Vrata* represent the social aspects of *Rta* That which constitutes the essence of a thing and is responsible for its growth and for its becoming what it is, is *Svadha* Thus not only individuals but also society will have its *Svadha* It is because of *Svadha* that societies and traditions last for that which is not in tune with nature will not last Even a god has to follow his *Svadha* He cannot be arbitrary[4] Thus morality and law are based upon immutable divine reason and not on divine will

From these conceptions it followed that justice is a condition in which each keeps within his appointed sphere (*Cp* Aristotle) Hindu thinkers in general thought that the business of government is to preserve justice This implies that a government has to see every individual remains in his sphere of duties, determined by the country, religion, caste, and family, to which he naturally belongs[5] Hindu thinkers further believe that justice without force is impotent Without punishment or *danda* neither justice nor security can be realized As the

Mahabharata said, "It is the fear of the punishment of a king, or of hell, or of society, that keeps people away from sin" Punishment not only threatens possible offenders but purifies the sinners[6] Thus in Hindu ideology law becomes almost wholly punitive The rod of punishment or *danda* is also the rod of justice Some competent writers on comparative law opine that the concept of *Rta* influenced especially the Romans to develop their own concepts of law and morality In Roman thought *Rta* became *Ratum* or ratio and Augustine Christianized it as *Pax*

We do not have any exact historical data regarding the origins of kingship in India The *Aitareya Brahmana* says that when the *devas* were defeated by *asuras*, the former thought this was because they had no king So they all agreed to elect Indra as the king of *devas*, because he was the best and the most powerful of them A Rgvedic passage which says that Indra's strength is derived from the *devas* and his power is founded in wisdom seems to support this[8] Some modern historians think that the *devas*, or the shining ones referred to here were no other than the Aryans in India whereas the *asuras* perhaps were the Sumerians It is possible that in early Rgvedic times the natural military leader, he who could sack cities (*puram bhetta*), became also the ruler (*gopta janasya*) the king and protector

In the *Satapatha Brahmana* it is mentioned that a king rules over many because he is the vicegerent of Prajapati the Lord of beings[9] The *Manusmrti* which was perhaps developed into its present form in the Sunga period says that a king is the deity in human form, that kings are created by God Thus we see that in later times the law codes tried to make kingship a divine institution, but the old idea that a king is after all human was never lost For example, Baudhayana conceives a king almost as a salaried official[10]

The *Manabharata* puts forward two different accounts as to how government arose, reminding us of the speculations of

Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and earlier European thinkers.

1. There was at one time an age of righteousness There was then no government and no punishment All men then lived by *Dharma* alone Later they developed anguish and became deluded As a result of this they lost their discrimination and destroyed the moral law. Greed, Lust, and Desire overpowered them Seeing this they prayed to the creator, who appointed a ruler and also gave him a code of law composed by himself [11]

2 At another place the *Mahabharata* gives a different account In the beginning men lived, governed by the law of fishes Power was the only law and strength the only rule. Finding life intolerable they made a covenant and agreed that transgressors should be expelled for some time Later when they found that it was difficult for all voluntarily to follow the covenant they prayed to the creator that they might be given a ruler who would enforce the covenant and this was done [12]

Thus while some thinkers tried to base kingship upon the common consent of the people, there were others who tried to represent it as divine, as something which was imposed from above

It may however be surmised that during the Vedic times monarchy was the usual form of government, and prior to the time when the *Aitareya Brahmana* was composed there was no hereditary kingship Even the *Mahabharata* admits at places that a monarch is elected The story of the deposition of king Vena found in it and all the *puranas* shows this The *Dharma Sutras* believe it is possible for a king to be sinful,[13] and for such kings penance is prescribed [14] The *Mahabharata* quotes an ancient treatise which says that a king who is unfit must be shunned like a split boat in the sea [15] In another passage, an incompetent king is compared to a useless bullock and a barren cow.[16] A king who cannot uphold virtue ceases to be a king,[17] and an incompetent one should be slain by his subjects like a mad dog [18] Even the conservative *Manu* suggests in some passages that people have the right to rebel against an oppressive

king[19] Thus the right to tyrannicide seems to have been granted by some Hindu thinkers

An analysis of the coronation oaths in the *Vedas* and the *Brahmanas* shows that Hindu kingship at that time was regarded as a human institution A king, they show, was elected, by becoming a king one entered into a contract with people Rulership was a trust placed in him He could not be arbitrary but had to work in cooperation with a council After the coronation and a ceremonial drive a newly made king was enthroned and silently touched on the back with a rod—the sceptre of justice This was to show that the king was not above law but below it and that he was punishable (*Tasmat raja dandyo*)[20] The most ancient book available on Hindu polity, Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, acknowledges this when it says that a king cannot be arbitrary, that he can make only regulatory laws but not substantive laws, and when it adds that a king who uses *danda* wrongly is destroyed Kautilya is emphatic that the unrighteous and the foolish cannot wield *danda* Elsewhere the *Arthasastra* says that for the king the good is not his personal likes, but the likes of his subjects Even *Manu* admits that a king is below law and is liable to fine The *Sukla Yajurveda* the *Atharvaveda* the *Taittiriya Brahmana* and the *Krsna Yajurveda* admit that a king can be deposed and exiled and also reinstated by the people A situation like that described by Herodotus in the Persia of Cambyses' time when the judges thought that the king can do whatever he liked was never found in Hindu India

The Vedic king s power was limited by the deliberations and the expressed will of two different kinds of peoples assemblies—the *sabha* and the *samiti* On the concord between the *samiti* and the king depended a realm s prosperity (*Rg Veda* X 191 3) though a powerful king could dominate it The later Vedic king was more often an elected one The Post Vedic king s power was limited by that of the *parisad* and the *sabha* in which

vaisyas and sudras also found places We learn this from Panini and the Mahabharata Iranian and Greek influences and the growth of Mauryan power might have contributed to the weakening of these democratic checks But the *Satapatha Brahmana* is quite specific regarding the task of a ruler He is the director and the regulator of the people He is steadily responsible for agriculture (*Krsi*) for economic prosperity (*Rayyai*) and develop ment (*Posa*) and the general welfare of people (*Ksema*) [21] The same book insists a king must be law abiding and law protect ing [22] The *Atharva Veda* makes it clear that the increase of material prosperity is the king s business The *Jataka* tales tell us that a king is not the master of all citizens but only of the lawbreakers As the *Arthasastra* picturesquely puts it the king has to rule by the sword but the inner content or the embryo of the sword must be righteousness (*Asina Dharma garbhena palaya sva*) A king it says must obey a *purohita* (the spiritual precep tor) as a servant ob ys his master (I 5) Laws and conven tions says *Sukraniti* should not be changed by the king except after discussion by learned wise men who will take into consideration the following factors what are the present laws? What were the past laws? Which of them were taught by the scriptures and which of them are against the scriptures and against the welfare of the world at present? The *Maha bharata* tells us that a king on assumption of his office must take the following oath and follow it I will govern or protect always all that belongs to the country as Brahman itself All the law that there is and endorsed by ethics (*Niti*)— that I will undoubtedly maintain by resorting to punishment (*Danda*) I will never be arbitrary or self willed [4] A king who during his rule transgresses this oath is liable to depo sition and tyrannicide From all this it can be concluded that the moral law is above sovereignty and that the Hindu theory of sovereignty does not give any scope for being described as oriental despotism

As many of the Pali Buddhist books show and as

Magasthenes testifies writing in the fourth century B C, the Vedic age of monarchies was succeeded by a number of democracies The *Aitereya Brahmana*, which may be put at 1000 B C, suggests this when it says that at that time, except the midlands (by which was meant the country from Kuruksetra to Allahabad, the Doab between the Ganga and the Yamuna) all Aryan India was republican But in the East there was an empire That in the Buddha's time there were many republics as well as powerful monarchies is well known from Pali sources Panini's Sutras refer to republics (*ganas*) and confederations of republics ruled by the free will (*chandas*) of all the people, the government consisting of a body of Ksatriyas The rules for the government of the Buddhist Sangha (monastic order) were adopted from the rules and conventions followed by the republics at that time We learn from Pali sources that these republics in general followed these seven principles 1 They held full and frequent assemblies 2 They met in concord rose in concord, and carried on their business in concord 3 They always acted in accordance with ancient institutions 4 The elders were always honoured and obeyed 5 Force was not used towards women and girls 6 Religious establishments were honoured and supported 7 The wise men among them were protected and rightfully defended In the *Digha Nikaya* the Buddha is reported to have said that so long as a republic follows these principles it cannot be conquered In the place of the above three last rules the Buddhist Sangha substituted for itself the following 1 One should not become subject to craving 2 One should take delight in solitude 3 One should train the mind

From the accounts left by Magasthenes and Strabo and from Buddhist books we learn that the Licchavis at Vaisali the Videhas at Mithila and the Kathians to the east of the river Ravi with Sankala as their capital were the earliest republics At a later date the Licchavis and the Videhas

combined to form a mammoth republican federation—the Vajji Sangha which lasted from the time of the Buddha to the time of the founding of the Gupta Empire Some of these republics were states governed by Aristocracies (*Kulas*) whereas others were governed by elected magistrates These latter were called "*ganas*" As the Greek writers testify, these and other similar republics were free autonomous, and independent The Greek descriptions of the Kathians remind us of Sparta Courageous and able in war, the Kathians and the Saubhutis (another republic) practised eugenics Children among these were reared under the direction of state medical men, while the deformed and the defective were killed in the second month Marriages were made by choice and women immolated themselves along with their husbands Strabo and Diodorus mention this It is interesting to note that the great Upanisadic teacher Naciketas, who confronted Death and learned the secret of immortality belonged to this republic A portion of the *Krsna Yajurveda*, the *Kathaka Samhita*, was composed by the Kathians The basis of a Hindu law code, the *Visnu Smrti* was a *Dharma Sutra* composed by the Kathians It is again interesting to see that the Buddha belonged to a republic ruled by an aristocracy Two other great religious geniuses, Aristanemi of Jainism and Krsna of the Bhagvadgita, belonged to the republic of Andhaka-Vrsnis or Satvatas The state to which the Buddha belonged was ruled by a number of Rajas, one of them being the president, whereas the state to which the Satvatas belonged was ruled by two Rajanyas From the Mahabharata however we learn that the Satvatas together with other republican peoples such as the Yadavas the Kukuras and the Bhojas formed a confederation of which Krsna was the federal president, though each had their own chief

In the *Mahabharata* we find an analysis of the reasons responsible for the destruction of republics and aristocracies Due to greed and jealousy and absence of mutual confidence, internal dissensions slowly raise their heads Due to the method

politics as a natural phenomenon and therefore saw no reason why something natural should be censored It is possible that Kautilya, who was responsible for the building up of a mighty empire through the uprooting of an older dynasty and the welding together of a number of small states, and who was constantly threatened by foreign invasions should have preached the autonomy of politics from morality It is also understandable that the Niti writers of the middle ages, whose great desire was to see that a strong Hindu state emerged, should have preached the gospel of power A new dynasty has to legitimize itself and win stability, and the first task of a newly formed empire would be the subjugation of the conquered peoples and the liquidation of the rebellious and the disgruntled

Almost all conquerors, colonial powers and founders of new dynasties have resorted to these methods But the Hindu writers of the *Arthasastras* seem to be the first to theorize and validate these methods To go into some details, Kautilya suggests that a prince should ingratiate himself with heretics corporations gods, rich widows and merchants but at the same time should rob them either by taxation or by direct seizure of properties Poison spies and provocation may be used to control people who disturb peace Through intrigue assassination by use of poison and magic and by setting against one's rivals and enemies their own relatives one can get rid of inconvenient persons and groups By claiming that gods are associated with oneself enemies should be discouraged and friends encouraged Any means can be used for raising money For instance Kautilya suggests that by deceit an idol can be implanted in a lonely place and it can be announced that it is self sprung and money can be made out of it

For a discussion regarding the justification of these methods we have, however to turn to the *Mahabharata* In that book while at most places a king is advised to follow *Dharma* always and rule in accordance with the scriptures, considering himself to be the guardian of all the people at other places it is

suggested that a king cannot sometimes succeed unless he willingly practises duplicity, deceit, and ruthlessness. Thus in some places it advises that a king should be soft in speech but hard at heart. He must be humble before the enemies when the time is unfavourable, but must destroy them when the opportunity comes. There must be no hesitation to kill anybody, whether a relative or a friend, for achieving one's ends. Without cruelty kings cannot attain felicity. While showing outward sympathy enemies must be mercilessly destroyed. When the odds are against, one should sacrifice self respect and honour but must strike back when the time is ripe.*[2]

This question was also raised in the *Mahabharata* itself, if politics in itself is immoral why should one practise it? and how does it differ from other immoral activities like robbery, etc.? To this one type of answer says that a certain class of men, the Ksatriyas, has the obligation to govern, fight and conquer. Since this duty is imposed upon them by their very birth and by scripture, it is not immoral for the Ksatriyas to fight and conquer. Another type of answer says that the king or the state is above morality and in the discharge of his obligations a ruler whether indulging in war or suppressing rebellions cannot sin. A third type of answer is much more drastic. It says that politics must be based on empirical knowledge and the logic of facts, and scriptures have nothing to say in this matter. As life is more important than religious merit and as politics is after all acquisition of power, the weak virtuous man cannot succeed in politics, so strength must be acquired by any means.[4] Lastly, it is also shown that the nature of existence itself is a struggle for survival and since everything in the world is desired by a number of men there is bound to be a struggle. Like everything else power must be fought for

* This Epic, however, also lays down that these methods may be resorted to only in desperate situations only, and that in any case the sin resulting therefrom must be atoned for in this or the next life. Through a just rule, sacrifice and charities, a ruler atones for his evil deeds.

and won In some places it is said that immoral means must be used only against immoral persons, or when it is not possible to preserve oneself in power through moral means, or when the achievement of the good necessarily requires their adoption *

Nowhere in the classical Hindu books do we find the idea that evil must be tolerated, or that evil must not be resisted The only two positions with regard to politics which we find in classical Hindu books are these It is impossible to be wholly moral in politics, but since man cannot be without political life, at least certain men are destined to participate in politics For such men it is not a sin to strive for power, win it, and preserve it For securing these ends they might have to resort to means which are conventionally regarded as immoral, but because it is necessary for such men to be in politics, they beget no sin In contrast to this we find the other view which holds that politics and morality have no connection with each other, that political ends must be obtained only by political means and that these are amoral It is very curious that no classical Hindu thinker regarded it possible to moralize statecraft Either one should choose to be in it and ignore ethics, or if one wholly wants to be ethical he must remain aloof from statecraft

The *Manusmrti*, the *Santiparva*, and the *Arthasastras* enjoin upon rulers the duty of entering into rivalry with neighbouring rulers An unambitious king, a king who does not want to extend his suzerainty, a king who shuns righteous war, is to be despised The ideal of the Hindu King was considered to

* It is also said the strength of the ruler is the basis of righteousness for he preserves it *Tanmulam sarva dharmanam* That and his *kosa* (treasury) are the foundations of the State So the State must never languish (*avasidana*) and to avoid this the ruler s strength must be preserved and augmented in every way So for this *karya* (duty) *akarya* (what ought not to be done) may be necessary sometimes All this is about ' Machiavellian methods Just wars punishment of the wrong doers heavy taxation when necessary to build up the strength of the State — these are entirely moral, a ksatriya s duty (For this and above note, see *Santiparva*, Madras edition pp 656–9 460 1 467, 473)

be the founding of an All India Empire From 570 B C conquest leading to the unification of India and the establishment of an Indian order became the ideal for every Hindu king Kautilya defined the imperial field or the *Cakravarta* as the country lying between the Himalayas and the Cape Comorin " Basing himself on Megasthenes, Arrian tells us that their sense of justice prevented the Indian kings from attempting to conquer beyond the limits of India This led to the curious position that Hindu kings were encouraged to fight with each other while they were discouraged from conquering neighbouring countries It was because of this that in most extant books on Hindu polity the theme is often conquest No neighbouring state should be considered as a friendly state and ultimately no state in India was considered to be the friend of any other Indian state This dilemma could only be resolved by the founding of an all India Empire which it was imagined would lead to perpetual peace and harmony all over India, but this advice in actual practice led to incessant internecine fights among the Hindu kingdoms This weakened and made them a prey to successive conquests from outside India

In the twentieth century for the first time the teachings and activities of Mahatma Gandhi expressed an attitude which was very different from the classical Hindu attitude towards politics Like some sages of old he did not want to keep himself aloof from the social and political life of the country On the other hand he did not want to achieve his political ends through the means usually adopted Enunciating the maxim that right ends should be won by right means and that means are as important as ends he tried to introduce into politics a code of conduct which only strictly religious men usually practised He wanted eschewal of all violence even for winning goals like the independence of one s country He wished that there should be no scramble for power, and believed that this could be achieved by decentralizing power If there is no such thing as a central government and the whole country lives in its thousands of

small villages, each self-sufficient both industrially and agriculturally, and if, as far as possible, each family becomes autonomous producing its own food and other necessities, then, he thought, there will be an absence of the scope for power politics Gandhi however recognized that such a system of autonomous villages cannot have modern advanced technological civilization, nor can they form a planned society on a large scale He in fact considered material prosperity as having no value whatsoever The simpler the life of a man, he believed, the more in tune with nature and the better it would be In effect Gandhi's doctrine implies that the sacrifice of the central organization, military and police power, and technology, will mean the end of power politics and the ushering in of an era when men will need the least government

I have discussed the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence eleswhere in detail[28] and do not propose to devote much space to it now It involves the assumption that while physical force must totally be given up and while the aggressor or the political enemy must in no way be resisted physically one can inflict suffering upon oneself so that it may move the heart of the opponent Self-inflicted suffering may be used as an instrument to persuade rulers, aggressors, or political opponents This theory is open to two criticisms Not everybody in the world can be moved by another's self inflicted suffering Secondly, whether a man has the right to inflict upon himself suffering even though he sincerely believes his cause to be right, is questionable Also, inasmuch as self inflicted suffering seems to make an emotional appeal and tries to befuddle and goad the man whom one seeks to convert, its moral value cannot be higher than that of reasonable persuasion When one believes one's cause to be just and when one fails to assert one's own right through discussion and rational persuasion the moral and manly thing seems to be *to fight for one's cause*

ii

After this brief presentation of classical Hindu political and ethical thinking, I will now develop these thoughts and reformulate them to suit the present context.

Much of political life consists in influencing men to act in the way in which one likes them to act. Men are what they are, that is, they have their own ideas, prejudices, inclinations, virtues, and defects. The politician must work with this material. To make men undertake common action, or to make them come to certain agreements, it would be necessary to soothe their illusions, flatter their vanity, or appeal to their superstitions. Thus empirical necessity might force a politician not to be good and straight-forward. For achieving certain kinds of goodness evil may have to be allowed to manifest itself, if it appears to be the only means of bringing sluggish masses into the required form. The hard core of all political action is the selfish interest of a leader, a group, or a state. To achieve these interests in an existing situation, a certain type of action alone may become necessary. For this, certain rights and obligations may have to be set aside.

The politician does not always find his historic situation co-operating with him. He and the objective historic situation may often confront each other, and political necessity, *i.e.*, the causal pressure necessary to align the people to a particular way of thinking and doing, may force the politician and the statesman to act in ways which are usually considered against morality. Every politician *ipso facto* logically needs power. This applies also to parties and states. But there are many persons, parties, and states planning to acquire power, so naturally there will be conflicts. In such a case when the end controls the means and when the only necessary means are adopted, it might be found that they are immoral means. The only solution of this dilemma would be either to renounce politics, or acquiesce in the victory of the other person, party, or state.

In this connection it is often said that power pursued for the sake of the common good is justified But this does not seem to be tenable, because it is difficult for oneself or for others to know how far one is subject to pleonexia and how far one is trying to promote the common good There is no agreement usually at any time as to what the common good is Any amount of cool and rational deliberation can never achieve unanimity on this In all politicians there is bound to be an elemental power urge and it is difficult to judge either introspectively or historically between idealistic and utilitarian actions in politics Even in past cases it is difficult to decide how far state interests or personal emotions of statesmen motivated actions

This problem of power is further complicated by another factor A man becomes a politician or a statesman, because he has the power-drive in himself, or because he thinks he knows wherein the good of the people lies and that he ought to make them get it The needs of the people and certain factors in a situation allow some men to become leaders or rulers and because they receive compensations, the people allow themselves to be governed When a politician wins power he must exercise it, if he wants to retain it For this he has to organize power and gradually there comes a stage when power becomes an independent entity, transcends the politician himself, making him serve it Thus in the end he who seeks and strives for power, and gets it, is compelled to become its slave But so long as power remains purposive, obeying certain rules and adhering to certain values, it lives and grows while blind power destroys itself sooner or later

To recapitulate this discussion, a politician has to deal with the situation in which he finds himself In Machiavelli's Italy or in Kautilya's India, when poison and assassination were customary means to achieve political ends, soft countermeasures could not have been of any avail In a desperate situation when life has putrefied forcible action alone can reorganize it

But here it might be argued that a man has some freedom and responsibility and that he must try to influence events and that he must not claim inability in the face of a situation. Against this it may be pointed out that all situations are a mixture of necessity and freedom. Historical reality is not shaped by the free and responsible actions of men alone, but also by the blind imperative urges of life. This means that every situation is unique and can be dealt with only on its level. General moral laws will not be universally applicable because political ends can be obtained by only political means, and politico-economical life is prior to moral life. It can be only urged that accepting the logic of politics and acting in a political manner, one must constantly strive to produce morality through this action. The useful must be transformed into the ethical and politics must become a means for the moral life. Since politics constantly creates new needs, current politics must always be transformed into a new type of politics and each successive transformation of politics may be made to achieve better forms of living, in other words, better forms of morality, because after all morality is the good life.

The supreme end of politics is the security, integrity, and well-being of the state. A statesman's great mission is to secure these values. Now the essence of the state is power, for, without it the state cannot function. Protection of people and upholding of justice are dependent on power — *danda*; without it a society cannot develop and the beast in man cannot be held in check. Any institution requires power but a state needs it more than the others. There was a time when the state was not the supreme power even within its sphere; it had rivals like the church or the guilds. Then it always had the temptation to resort to immoral means; but to a very large extent the modern state today is supreme in its domestic sphere. Even now when a crisis like a revolution or a mass-strike occurs, the state's power is challenged, but through legislation the state can legalize the means by which

it can suppress these movements. Still the question of the ethics of a particular legislation could be raised. But the final answer here has to be that the contemporary world is based on a system of nation-states and modern states are not mere power-states, but culture states. Without a state a people cannot realize higher life and culture, of which they are capable. Thus the state in the contemporary world becomes a supreme value and its security and integrity are a supreme moral value; and to achieve the realization and preservation of a nation-state through all the necessary means becomes a supreme duty. Each state has its own necessities, needs, and reason. A well-defined state with a history and a living reality becomes a kind of vital being, which wants to exist, assert itself, and develop freely and fully, without any restraint. For this the state needs power, and as it matures it becomes more and more a determinate being with its own, so to say, biological needs and its own concrete rights and these may often be at variance with universal moral commands. In such cases, one school of thinkers holds that the rights and needs of the state express a higher moral law and that the maintenance and development of the state is *the* highest duty, and this concrete vital duty cannot be sacrificed for an imagined ideal. From this follows the theory of *raison d'etat*, which lays down that for preserving the life and freedom of a state, any course of action is justifiable and, if need be, morality and law must be set aside. But most political theorists are agreed that such flouting of morality and law should be resorted to only in the public interest and only when to act otherwise would endanger the state. When particular and private motives, egoism, revenge, or self-aggrandizement are completely absent and only when the action undertaken is solely for the sake of the state, it cannot be judged at the bar of morality. Individuals' passions and impulses must not break out under the cloak of *raison d'etat*. To the question why the welfare of a state should justify actions which the

welfare of an individual does not there does not seem to be any adequate answer* except to lay it down axiomatically that the former is a much higher value than the latter and that for achieving this good the only necessary means available must be resorted to even if they chance to be immoral One could go further and argue that in such cases the means are only evil in appearance but really they are not but the assumption on which this position is based is unprovable

The problem described above mainly concerns the politician who is at the helm of affairs for all states act only through individual statesmen and it is possible that a statesman acting on behalf of a state is ruthless while in private life he may be gentle and law abiding but so long as he sincerely believes he is following the interests of the state though subconsciously it may only be his pleonexia or prejudices that are guiding him he has at least a justifiable ground for his actions On the other hand the politician aspiring for power or the party in opposition presents yet another problem It is possible that sometimes the interests of certain parties and individuals may be in conflict with those of the state to which they belong This is especially so when in certain countries modern parties tend to be quasi state organizations In such cases wherein does morality lie in following the political interests of oneself and one s party or the interests of the state? Here also as the contemporary world order is constituted the answer seems to be that state interests must remain paramount for without the state a people cannot realize their higher cultural life independently and according to their own nature

In opposition to the assumptions underlying the above way of thinking it may be held that the security and integrity of the state do not constitute a more supreme value than moral law and justice The state which is meant for the realization of

* The *Mahabharata* maintained that if the state did not exist Dharma would cease to exist So state interests become paramount

justice cannot be allowed to disrupt it As pointed out already, there is now no need for a modern state to resort to immoral means within the domestic sphere, for here at last it has become the supreme power, and when it seeks additional power, legislation can secure it, and in a fully democratic state all legislation can be taken to be more or less in tune with morality, as it is based on the consent of the majority and not on the whims and fancies of an individual's or a party's arbitrary will On the other hand, in the international sphere, there is no established order, law, and justice, and no power to uphold them So here the law of the jungle still prevails States fight with each other not only for what they believe to be their rights with all the means at their disposal, but also for augmenting their power Much has, however, happened since the days when naked power politics were openly preached and practised Ethics has to a large extent moralized power politics and the discovery of more and more powerful destructive weapons and the possession of them by more than one country is operating more and more against power politics The impulses of man are slowly working towards the foundation of an international order which will create a civilized world in which human rights everywhere will be protected and poverty and war will be eliminated States then will become the instruments of an international order based on moral ideas This ideal of the fully ethical state confronts the contemporary statesmen and does not allow the intelligent among them to concentrate solely on the limited needs of their own states A challenge is thus presented to the political faith which regards each nation state as *the* ultimate value The possibility that at least one state may still cling to the old faith and the old methods and be successful when it has differences with another keeps this great ideal far from realization

Anyway the contemporary situation with its unprecedented success in technology and progress in universalistic moral ideals has created new interests and is forcing the statesmen to rise to

its level These new ideas, stirrings and impulses confront the statesmen and await translation into agreements, treaties, and laws, which will secure an international order based on peace, justice, and socio-economic equality, values which have been to an extent realized in some states but which have to be raised to the international level Unless appropriate concepts are forged statesmen cannot rise to this situation, and unless people all over the world adopt these new concepts, statesmen alone can do little This calls for the forging if necessary, and the promotion of such concepts and the formation of an appropriate ethical conscience and habits Elsewhere I have ventured to single out three such ideas *homonoia*, tolerance, and universal ethics [20]

Till this new climate of thought comes about, it is nonsense to talk of states practising morality, though in intra state politics to practise morality successfully is not impossible even now, because in many modern states people are becoming more and more enlightened through the spread of universal education and growing political sense

Notes for Chapter One - The Indian Spirit : Past and Present

(Notes marked with an asterisk are added in 1964)

1 * For a discussion whether there is a common human nature or not, see pp 43-46 and the whole of Lecture Two in my book *Metaphysics, Man and Freedom*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963

2 *Rgveda*, IX 113, 6-11, X 16 1

3 *Atharva*, VIII 1-1, 2-13

4 Ibid, XII, 5-9, XIV, 2-71

5 Loc cit, XII, 1-56

6 Loc cit, VI 162

7 *Aitareya Brahmana* VII 15

* This passage says that one s fortune would grow only when one moves forward constantly without relaxing Progress depends upon activity This is the theme found in many books devoted to *artha* and *niti*, which praise *udyama, utsaha* and *sahasa* (adventure initiative effort enthusiasm and courage)

8 * Louis Renou writes

"The fact that he (the Ksatriya) occupies the second rank in the hierarchy does not in any way diminish his supremacy in those matters which are his special concern in particular the State administration " "In spite of their 'pro-Brahman slant, the Vedic texts sometimes place the two classes on the same level, while the Buddhist and Jain texts systematically place the Ksatriya above the Brahman' ' The relations of the two powers have varied somewhat in the course of history, but the dominant impression is that the Ksatra prevailed over the Brahman, in other words the king enjoyed

undisputed sovereignty (*The Civilization of Ancient India*, Calcutta 1959, p 46 92)

* Sri Aurobindo says "The Brahmins in spite of their ever increasing and finally predominant authority did not and could not usurp in India the political power —— They exercised a very considerable influence but the real or active political power remained with the king the Ksatriya aristocracy and the commons " (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, New York, 1953, p 369)

* Cp Max Weber who says the Brahmanas claimed but were unable to maintain the monopoly of even mystical knowledge, philosophy or science (*The Religion of India*, Glencoe, Illinois 1958 p 154-5) From the 4th century B C., to 300 A D , Weber comments no inscription was favourable to the Brahmanas (Ibid p 292 3) Brahmana power grew only after foreign conquests destroyed or disrupted the nobility

8A * In the Pre Upanisadic and Pre Buddhistic period, when for a time ritualism was rampant and when many of the beliefs and practices lauded in the *Satapatha Taittiriya* and *Aitareya* were in vogue the Brahmana class was somewhat a power to be reckoned with Due to the huge sacrificial fees and the prevalence of magic which was a priestly monopoly, the Brahmanas were also economically well off then Sylvain Levi s *La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas* (Paris 1898) contains a brilliant treatment of this *milieu* Such a period of prosperity for the priests never recurred though for brief periods under the Sungas the Satavahanas etc and in the age of Kumarila Prabhakara and Mandana, there were attempts to revive the ritualistic Brahmana religion The Vedanta and Bhakti movements and their universal appeal effectively prevented this The priests however could make a comfortable living as teachers of Vedas and Sastras which was possible because of endowments by Hindu kings and chiefs and as officiants in temples and daily and occasional religious ceremonies (*nitya naimittika karmas*) In the Muslim and British periods rituals and ceremonies became more unpopular reliance on priests decreased still further and religious teachers arose in greater numbers from all castes Priesthood became a very uneconomic profession and of less and less prestige, and so was the case with sastraic learning No wonder the vested interests moaned that the sinful Kali Age had fully got into its stride In the Muslim and the British periods Brahmanas were among the first to learn Persian and English and enter government service The other castes did not do this to such an extent, as they had their own productive professions or private properties and also as they had no aptitude for learning due to their upbringing and heredity In the British period when Indians were divested of all real

political power and Indian industry trade and commerce were d srupted and the country was reduced to a colony the government servants b came the most influential class in society In India as a whole and specially in the South it was thus that the Brahmanas came into ascendance in the British period In due course there were unfortunate and misguided reactions against this The Justice Party to some extent and the Dravida Kazhagam etc represent this Because of this non Brahmana castes secured special concessions and privileg s in educational institutions and government service In independent Ind a with adult franch s b caus of the overwhelming numbers of oth r castes the growth of industries and commerce controlled by these and the general awakening of the masses the Brahmanas do not enjoy any special power or privileges Yet because of their background upbr nging and cultivated capacities in the learned and techn cal professions in the educational and scientific realm and in competitive civil service examinations the Brahmanas have a justified pre eminence shared with some other higher castes In the South especially some leaders of the other castes are foolishly jealous of th s preeminence and claim special treatment and privileges and against these o her castes in turn some leaders of Harijans and the tribal people have resentm nt and demand for perpetuity special privileges and concessions There is as much sense in all this jealousy and resentment as in a backward nation s jealousy and resentment towards an advanced and mighty nation But th n human attitudes are often irrat onal !

9 * See T W Rhys Davids *Buddh st India* Calcutta 1950 Chapter IV R F cke *The Social Organisation in North East Ind a in Buddha s Time* Calcutta 1920

* The best criticism of the caste system in ancient literature is found in Asvaghosha s *Vajrasuci*

10 * In the Brahmana books too there is no unanimity on the extent of Brahmana supremacy [Ridicule of Brahmanas may be found at a few places even in anc ent Sanskrit scriptures e g *The Aitareya* (VII 29) says that Ksatriyas considered the Brahmanas as receivers of gifts drinkers of soma and eaters of food to be expelled at will The *Chandogya* compares sacrificial pr ests to dogs moving round in a circle each catching hold of another s tail in its mouth chanting Om let us eat Om let us dr nk] In the pre-Mauryan *dharmasastra* literature the emphasis is on Aryan supremacy and Sudra lowliness Among the Aryans the two h gher varnas were more or less equal while the Vaisyas were at a slightly lower level All common people following any occupation other than that of princes

warriors, priests and professional teachers were Vaisyas. In actual life the Vaisyas were as powerful as the Ksatriyas and more powerful than the Brahmanas. The slaves were the Sudras. There was however a distinct tendency in priestly manuals to glorify the Brahmanas as Gods on earth. With the rise of the Magadhan universal state, the Brahmanas gave up even in theory claims to their own exclusiveness and supremacy. The *Arthasastra* literature bears witness to this although much of it was composed by the Brahmanas. Royal power was absolutely sovereign in the legislative sphere and a complex bureaucracy governed in the executive sphere. The Sungas, successor dynasty of the Mauryans, were anti-Buddhistic and extremely pro-Brahmanical. It was in their time that the ideas in the *Manusmrti* got crystallized. In it the Brahmanas were given many legal concessions, a privileged position in society, and were to some extent put outside the purview of the laws of the state. All that is found in the present *Manusmrti* was perhaps never followed for any considerable length of time in an extensive way. This is shown by the effort made in the *Mahabharata* to synthesize the ideas of the *dharmasastra* and the *artha sastra*. The *Mahabharata* very probably belonged to the same period as the *Manusmrti*. In secular matters the king becomes supreme; in religious matters the Brahmana becomes supreme. The *Yajnavalkyasmrti*, composed perhaps in the Gupta Age maintains that no one is above law. Caste or property entitles no one, whether a Brahmana or a Ksatriya, to any exclusive privileges or legal concessions. Many of the disabilities and legal inequities imposed upon the Sudras in some previous *smrtis* are not found in the *Yajnavalkyasmrti*. There was thus development in *dharmasastra*.

It must be also remembered that till the British founded law courts in India and codified the precepts of some Sanskrit *dharmasastras* on the basis of what Jones, Colebrooke etc. heard and saw in Bengal, there was no uniform law in this country. There are innumerable *dharmasastras*. Written mostly by priests at different periods in different parts of India under varying conditions they consist of a hotchpotch of ethics, rules of behaviour and right conduct, descriptions of castes and local customs and advices and exhortations of all kinds and their injunctions are not all consistent with each other. This is not to deny that there are basic universal *dharmas* on which all the *dharmasastras* agree. With this essence of the *dharmasastras*, the kernel of Hindu ethics, I will deal in Chapter VII. Here I am concerned with *jati* and *kula dharmas* bewildering in their variety. Prior to the British no political authority ever promulgated them (*jati* and *kula dharmas*) and there was no executive or judicial authority to enforce them. Each community, caste, religious sect, tribal group and profession had its own customs and these again varied from one part of the country to another. Thus the customs and religious observances of even Brahmanas in

Bengal, Kerala, Kashmir, Maharashtra and Audh were not identical There was no one 'law' for all people in the entire country It was left to each autonomous caste, tribe and sect to see that its members did not violate its customs, when there was a serious violation and no amends were made, penalties, excommunication and ostracism ensued The state concerned itself only when peace and stability were endangered Dissenters, rebels and reformers could always form a new caste or sect (e g Buddhists, Lingayats, Sikhs etc) The *dharmasastras* were applicable only to those who accepted and adhered to them These books themselves asserted that local and caste customs and ancestral traditions should be relied upon and these, when they can be proved, can override the sastras For, after all a tradition or custom followed for generations may be based upon some un known *srti* whereas a *dharmasastra* is but a *smrti* with subordinate authority If however a practice went against the *srti* or the conscience of good men, it was considered unwarranted The *dharmasastras* were just speculative religious books laying down what ought to be the ideal conduct in a society following the *varnasrama* scheme They had nothing to say about castes tribes and professions that did not fall into the fourfold *varnasrama* order At no period in India did society entirely correspond to this ideal pattern, so at no time were the *smrtis* promulgated and enforced as 'laws' for all people throughout the country Many castes and tribes in India always followed customs entirely different from those found in the Brahma nical *smrtis* Actual practice and usage especially among the non Brahma nas, were not as restrictive as the smrti commands, natural liberties, human instircts and good sense found greater expression in them than in the smrtis The non-Brahman castes, especially the lower castes and tribes, were more or less free from evil practices like child marriages, *sati* and several taboos regarding food and cleanliness Some of the Brāhmanical customs (e g marrying one s sister s or maternal uncle s daughter) in South Ind a and other parts of India were also against *smrti* injunctions Early British civilians and judges in South India (e g , Burnell Nelson and Ellis) noted that the *smrtis* did not govern the conduct of many communities in the South and that the Brahmanas did not enjoy any supremacy or special privileges Uniformity began when courts established by the British took as 'law' precepts found in some Sanskrit *dharmasastras* used and relied upon by pandits in Bengal at that time, under the influence of whom Jones, Colebrooke and later Jolly etc took these books to contain "Hindu law". What was against them was declared illegal by the courts The 'modernistic' Hindus agreed to this because they thought this will be conducive to uniformity and progress It did to an extent contribute to the integration and solidarity of all Hindus but it also prevented progress and reform by

petrifying as law what some antique books taught Finally, the Hindu Code promulgated and enforced by the government of India after the achievement of independence has given a positive uniform law to the whole of the Hindu world This is based on the concepts of humanism natural and social justice, equality of all persons and progress This note is intended to show that regarding *Varnasrama*, priestly supremacy, caste exclusiveness otherworldliness taboos and customs etc no certain and safe conclusions can be drawn only on the basis of the *smrtis* The *dharmasastra* does not fully correspond to the social and political order that actually existed in India down the centuries It only depicts what the majority of Brahmanas conceived as the ideal order At the same time some Brahmanas were not unaware of the conflict between the eternal natural law engraved in human hearts and the *Varnasrama* traditions, practices and rituals In his great book *Hinduism* R. C Zaehner has brought this out clearly

11 * In these two cases both the parents were not pure Ksatriyas. But there is no unanimity on this The Sungas and Kanvas were Brahmanas Emperor Harsa a Vaisya the Nanda and Vijayanagara Emperors were Sudras the Divya dynasty of North Bengal was that of fishermen

12 * But as Sri Aurobindo pointed out, in no age in India did Brahmanas have a monopoly of sacred learning and the highest spiritual knowledge (Ibid p 393) The Vedic and Puranic rsis were born from all classes and castes so were the leaders of the *Bhakti* movements Coming to Modern India Vivekananda Aurobindo and Gandhi were not born in the Brahmana caste

13 * See Rhys Davids *Dialogues of the Buddha* I pp 212 219 *Buddhist India* p 164

* Rhys Davids thinks that the asrama theory was formulated by Brahmanas to prevent all and sundry from becoming wanderers (*parivrajakas*) and hermits and teaching that austerity and insight are higher than sacrifice and rituals as that would affect the interests of the priestly class The *asrama* theory seeks to ensure that no one shall become a recluse without passing through the schools of the Brahmanas and living after that a married life as prescribed by their books (*smrtis*) The aim was thus to secure Brahmana supremacy Sylvain Levi also seems to suggest this I do not think this is an entirely correct explanation The asrama scheme tries to secure a balance between asceticism and enjoyment world affirmation and world negation, freedom and responsibility in short harmony among the four ends of life viz *dharma* *artha* *kama* and *moksa* Some smrtis

have prohibited *sannyasa* in Kaliyuga whereas some scriptures (e g , *Yadaharева virajet, tadaharева pravrajet*) and Sankara maintained that it is not necessary that one should be a householder and perform even *nityakarmas* (daily obligatory duties) if one were seeking *moksa* only

* In his *B hadaranyaka Bhasya* (IV 5 15) Sankara clearly says that he who is disgusted with the world and is not impelled by desires can renounce the world even though he has not obtained knowledge One who comes to know about the Atman from the scriptures and his guru can renource the world even before direct realization The man who has realized the highest truth says Sankara cannot continue to lead a worldly life or perform actions for his knowledge destroys all his natural ideas of difference regarding action its agency factors and results Such a man will necessarily take to monastic life (Ibid) But in various places in his *Sutra Bhasya* Sankara is forced to adm t that only he who realizes the highest truth is entitled to renunciation and that *sannyasa* must come after the other three stages of life (See II 1 14 II 3 32 40 48, III 2 4, and specially III 4 20 26 32 3) Jaimini maintained that *sannyasa* was no where clearly enjoined in the *srtis* As against this Badarayana could only argue that it was implied by the *srtis* Only minor and late Upanisads like *Jabala* and *Narada Parivrajaka* maintain that *sannyasa* is an inevitable fourth stage and also that it may be taken skipping the earlier two stag s But as Sankara too admits there is nowhere an explicit *srti* injunction that the enlightened sage *must* renounce the world There are on the other hand some explicit passages which insist that actions and dut es must be performed as long as one lives [A reference may be made to *Ma tavilasa* a skit by Mahendravarma the Pallava king (C 620 A D) in which an inebriate Saiva ascetic who lost his begging bowl scooped out of a human skull accused a Buddhist monk of theft and a quarrel ensued in wh ch other ascetics joined but finally it was found that it was a dog who stole the bowl Ridicule of monks and ascetics is not absent in Sanskrit literature]

13A * Some *smrti* passages (e g *Manu* VI I) say that the fourfold *asrama* plan of life (25 years in each stage) is applicable to all *dvijas* (twice born) the higher castes They also make it clear that he who leaps over the earlier *asramas* without first spending his l fe in Vedic study marriage and sacrifices and straight away takes to *sannyasa* with a desire for liberation goes to hell (*vrajatyadhah* *Manu* VI 37) However from some passages in the *Mahabharata* and the *smrtis* it is clear that no one other than a Brahmana who is established in *brahmav dya* should think of *sannyasa* (renunciation the life of a recluse) But for them too it is not absolutely obligatory Even monks and recluses have to live so they have to depend on

tives So says *Manu*, IV, 4 7. To possess as little as possible should be his ideal] *Not withstanding what all is said, the Varnasrama system in its ideal form is one of the noblest social conceptions and the true Brahmana as conceived by the sastras is the highest human pattern* The first however was never a reality, whereas India did in all ages produce a few true Brahmanas

14 *While the essence of the book goes back to the fourth century B C, its present form may be as late as the fourth century A D Kautilya may have derived some of his ideas from Iranian and Hellenistic sources

15 *Some ascribe it to about 800 A D, others to even the sixteenth or the nineteenth century!

16 *On the basis of inscriptional evidence it has been shown that in the Chola empire villages were autonomous republics, every male person being a member of the general assembly that ruled each village It is proved this system existed for centuries previously Policies and general principles were laid down by the general assembly whereas actual administration was carried out by committees elected by the Assembly Except matters relating to foreign and military affairs, the entire civic administration was in the hands of the people the central or provincial governments interfered only when something went amiss (See S K Aiyangar *Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India*, Madras 1931) In the eighteenth century Munro and other British officers found in South India every village to be "a kind of little republic and the small landlords probably as comfortable as in any country in Europe (See G R Gleig *Life of Munro*, and K N V Sastri *The Munro System of British Statesmanship of India*) So, *Pace* Koestler who thinks that India cannot become a democracy unless Hindu society and tradition are destroyed (*The Lotus and the Robot*, London, 1961, p 160), democracy is not an entire novelty to India (See pp 221-6 in this book Some republican states existed in India till the 6th century A D)

16A *So was Indian science, which was considered as knowledge (*Vidya*) which gave power, and as art or technique (*Kala*) to realize this Indian science relied on empirical experience, but it came to study, analyse and attempt to know the causes of what is, in the light of certain general principles or ideas held to be valid The result was that phenomena were treated as the consequences or exemplifications at various levels of these general principles Thus Indian science in its methodology resembled the Cartesian rather than the Newtonian science which started with facts and

proceeded therefrom to seek unknown principles deciding to deal with them as the logic of consequences required Newtonian science started with what can be seen observed and analysed it, compared and calculated effects and stopped there It rested content with things experience knew and confirmed and left alone metaphysics. (But see below) *Hypotheses non fingo* as Newton himself said It was *Pyrrhonismus physicus* as a great Dutch doctor Boerhaave, of the early eighteenth century called it Indian Greek and Cartesian sciences went beyond this and sought to know reality in itself They spurned science tempered by scepticism and physics devoid of metaphysics Their faith in reason was unbounded But Greek and modern science delighted in the discovery of more and more truth and considered knowledge to be an end in itself They had a purely theoretical impulse Indian and Cartesian science, as well as Bacon sought through science happiness and power A happy long life free from diseases and worries if not immortality conquest over nature mastery of the cosmos to realize whatever we can will that was the ultimate aim of Indian science Many Baconians and Cartesians would have understood and agreed (In my long Introduction to our Telugu Translation of Descartes *Discourse on Method* I have discussed the nature of Cartesian methodology and briefly compared Descartes aims with those of some Indian philosophers)

The desire to win freedom and immortality resulted in the discovery of the techniques of Yoga and Tantra (M Eliade *Yoga Immortality and Freedom* New York brings this out in an excellent way) Yoga led to the development of anatomy physiology and psychology and study of the effects of food drugs actions and environment on the human personality The desire to conquer death led to the development of magic and alchemy As longevity was considered to be the next best thing to immortality desire for it fostered *ayurveda* medicine and surgery which in turn led to anatomical physiological and psychological studies It was again the quest for immortality that led to the creation of the Vedic altar, the Buddhist *stupa* and the Hindu temple which symbolically attempt to evoke the mortal s transformation into the immortal state The construction of symbolic figures necessitated the discovery of geometry geometric algebra and ultimately the science of mathematics (For instance these are some of the problems dealt with in the *Satapatha Brahmana* How to construct figures of different shapes with the same area? How to increase the area of a figure without changing its shape? How to sum up a series? Factorization Quadratic equations The value of $\sqrt{2}$ The theorem of the square of the diagonal Logistic conceptions such as topology functional connection etc, expressed in mythical symbols) Temple construction involved sculpture architecture and engineering Religious commercial architectural

and agricultural needs led to studies in astronomy, meteorology, geology and astrology The earth was discovered to be spherical Brahmagupta (7th century A D) calculated the circumference of the earth not incorrectly Aryabhata (5th century) thought the earth revolved round the sun rotating on its axis Equinoxes and lengths of years and lunar months were known and calculated, eclipses accurately forecast, the import of positive and negative quantities realized, and the implications of Zero and infinity were worked out By C 1150–1114 A D, Bhaskara discovered differential calculus Pursuit of *artha* and *kama* resulted in political, economic, erotic, anthropological and biological studies, as well as in arts and crafts that contributed to a civilized (*nagarika*) life All Indian studies and activities were pragmatic and empiric Freedom and happiness were the ultimate goals that inspired them Truth for Truth s sake, or Art for Art's sake—these mottos were unknown to classical India

It must be emphasized that scientific activity in the sense of disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and science in the sense of an organized system of knowledge based upon continuous observation and experimentation leading to abstract generalizations (expressed in mathematical formulae) constantly modified or corrected by such further observation and experimentation, and so on endlessly, gradually originated in Europe as the 16th century wore on and developed there only, remaining an Euro pean monopoly till almost the end of the 19th century Only Greek "science" was somewhat close to this, Babylonian, Indian and Chinese 'sciences' in their approaches and methods differed from this *scienza nuova*

From immemorial times the concepts of *Rta*, *Dharma*, *Niyama*, *Karma*, *Daivam* and *Vidhatr*, flourished in India implanting in this country a widespread faith in the order of nature and the moral order Indian think ers knew that all events were not only correlated with their antecedents but in some way interconnected with each other Minds which discovered *pratitya samutpada* and delighted in the intricacies of Nyaya and Navya Nyaya logics were fully aware of this As the *sutras*, *bhasyas* and *tikas* of the several *darsanas* show, Indian scholars cultivated habits of work and mind like patience and precision, and knew how to hunt for a point and cling to it when found Indian interest in facts is proved by the *sastras* composed by ancient and medieval Indians on every conceivable subject A good deal of Indian art, literature, folklore and philosophy is naturalistic All Indian religions considered the cosmos to be rational and inquiry into the origin of things (*jagatkarana mimamsa*) to be meaningful None of the Indian systems gave matter and the empirical world an ontological or axiological status lesser than that given to them by some of the books of the Old and New Testaments in the Bible Indians travelled widely for both

commerce and colonization This worldly interests were as intense in India as in Europe The almost constant warfare among the states in ancient and medieval India did not *stimulate technology and invention.* Yet all these factors which according to Whitehead Sombart Beloff Brinton and others *were responsible for the* rise of science in Europe could not provide a sufficient basis for the rise of *scientia nuova* in India This calls for an explanation

(1) In India there was no large and prosperous class of men with the *will* time and energy to devote themselves to exercise curiosity for its own sake alone An ambition to contribute to the advancement of knowledge as an end in itself did not inspire the Indian mind Economic and social conditions in Europe unlike in India provided incentives to research through endowments and organizations unconnected with politics or religion and devoted solely to science

(2) In India freedom from the weight of authority and customary ways of thinking and doing did not gain much ground As in late 16th and 17th century Europe there was no passion to see things never seen before and think thoughts *never thought before.* *Absolute novelty* (*Galileo Sidereus Nuncius*) did not become an objective value There arose no age of *adventure*

(3) Aristarchus of Samos (3rd century B. C) and Aryabhata (5th *century A D) conceived of the movement of the earth on its axis round* the sun Democritus of Abdera (5th century B C) and Kanada (4th *century B C) conceived of an atomic structure of matter Still that did* not give rise to science But when Galileo used his telescope to show *with the certainty of sense perception (Galileo op cit)* what hitherto remained inspired hypotheses the new scientific method arose This implied that (a) *truth does not reveal itself to mere observation or contemplation* but has to be wrested out by grappling and interfering with and transforming what we see *It is the homo faber who can discover it through* his experiments and for this instruments fabricated by man—not merely the senses and *reason—have to be used Experiments are an ordeal* (Galileo) a fight with nature to force it to disclose its secrets (b) It *further implied that the new science is possible only for* a man who can think and handle nature from a point outside the earth or as it transpired later without *a fixed point of reference* at all The shackles of spatiality (E A Burtt) have to be shed and man should free himself from *terrestrial limitations in thought and action* while still alive What was previously unthinkable has to be grasped in non spatial *symbolic language,* which enables *man to confront nature in experiments* under his own mental conditions (Galileo made this clear in his *Il Saggiatore*)

In India all this was impossible, because, *firstly*, for various reasons (see paragraph 2 in Note 31 for Chap III) technological advances were few and tardy As action was supposed to be inferior to thought there was no intensive interplay between the theoretical and the practical, so deliberately planned activity could not be made to influence thinking and vice versa This resulted in the impossibility of demonstrating speculations by experiments with consequences in the actual world So Indian science could not go beyond the pre-Galilean stage *Secondly*, even if some Indians had an inkling of ' science ', none of them gave it respectability a method and an aim as Bacon did in Europe *Thirdly* Indian man living in communion with nature with his confidence in concrete experience and feeling for lived reality, could not alienate himself from nature and rack it with experiments or think in abstract symbols So while he continued to live earth bound and in tune with immediately experienced reality in all its rich detail and variety, European man realized Bruno s dream I spread my wings upon the air—flying to the immense I cleave the skies, And while from my small globe I speed elsewhere—I leave behind what there is seen from far (*de l Infinito, Universo e Mondi* W C. Greene s Trans) But Bruno did not imagine that this signified a "march upon the powers of Heaven and the slaughter of gods (Marlowe) Without earth alienation and loss of common sense, the new science could not arise and develop India was thereby saved from bewilderment scepticism despair and nihilism which also arose in Europe from this venture but remained without the new science and technology Only in late 19th and 20th centuries India has started to take science and scientific outlook from the West If a sufficient number of men with the requisite outlook can freely devote themselves to scientific activity India can hope to make fundamental contributions to science as it is not dependent on race or religion

17 See on this last point Aquinas *Contra Gentiles* III 135 *Summa Theologica* II 2 182 1 2 Leclercq *Lecons de droit naturel* (1946) IV BK

18 See *Matt*, VI 19 32 XIX 21 24 *Mark* IV, 19 *Luke*, VI 20–34, XVIII 22 25 *Acts*, IV, 32 35

Notes for Chapter Two - India: History and Atavism

(*Those marked with asterisks are added in 1964*)

1 Jonathan Cape, London, 1961

2 As de Riencourt studied at Algiers and took his M A from that university, he must have known Khaldun s theory

3 *One is reminded of Toynbee s theory that Jewish history came to a close in 69 70 A D, when the Roman legions destroyed Jerusalem* The surviving Jewry is for him ' the debris of a devoted Syriac people ', ' pulverised social ash ', "a fossil' The resurgence of ancient Judea as modern Israel confounded this theory History defies historians' neat theories

4 "A society into which all men, whatever their characteristics, could fit ' – a society governed by the caste system

5 Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Dayananda, Vivekananda

5A * de Riencourt may not have known it, but in his Cambridge Rede Lecture, 1875, Sir Henry Maine put forward the theory that Indian civilization was "arrested" at an early stage of development, and so never *matured and that India remained since then in a state of "barbarism"* similar to that of Europe in the early Christian centuries (See his *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, 1885) Sir Alfred Lyall in his *Asiatic Studies* (1st & 2nd Series, 1882, 1889) and *The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India* (1894) echoed the idea that the *Indian society of his time was like ancient European society "in an arrested state* of development ' They thought so because, according to them, India could not develop nationalities, long-seated dynasties and a stable solid organization such as that of the European feudal order Indian culture, they held, remained at the tribal

level based on kinship groups held together by a superstitious, unorganized and indefinite religion. India, said Maine, "was the infancy of the human mind prolonged" Similarly, Mircea Eliade brands Yoga as "a living fossil, a modality of archaic spirituality" (*Yoga Immortality And Freedom*, p 361) Missionaries like Charles Grant and G. U Pope called Indian civilization the "decayed" one of a "degenerate" people, inspired by Satan (J Peggs) Whatever appears strange and alien to their own tradition, religion and history, is condemned by some people as 'primitive", 'barbarous', "archaic', or "satanic". The unintelligible is vicious and barbarous Some Indians and Chinese never hesitated to return in the same kind such Western compliments Attitudes of nations towards each other change from time to time Seldom are they based on objectivity and understanding sympathy In the 17th century Eastern civilizations were generally looked upon in Europe as great civilizations comparable to the European, which though may not be liked could not be despised With the developments in science and technology in Europe, in the 18th century, Indian and Chinese civilizations were considered as static and stagnant, as they still clung to ancestral religions and traditions of immemorial past, there was some hope for the Middle-East and West Asia, for did they not show the capacity to change by adopting Islam in the seventh century and later? Whatever does not change is primitive! With European imperialism and colonization established, in the 19th century all non-European cultures appeared barbarous to them, to the missionaries they were satanic Europe and Christianity had to reform and save these barbarians and heathens That was their duty and destiny Researches of the Orientalists, the first great war which shook the belief in the law of continuous progress the progress of Russia and Japan (both of which used to be considered barbarous), the counter attack from the East beginning with Vivekananda and others, reduced the aggressive confidence in European superiority Totalitarian developments in the interwar period, the second World War, and the cold war with the two blocs vying with each other to woo the underdeveloped countries, and new standpoints opened out by humanistic studies and social sciences (especially cultural anthropology) have stopped open attacks on other cultures and religions as 'barbarous' and "satanic' Still value judgments in a lower key are made Often military power and material prosperity are taken as the criteria It is on that and that basis alone that Western civilization in the modern age can be considered as superior to or higher than Eastern civilization But, are they valid criteria? This at least may be granted, viz they are empirically applicable and concrete

6 The division of cultures into space-conscious and time-conscious

ones is rather ridiculous Evolution of Hebrew *monotheism shows that the* same people at a certain stage in their history achieve greater clarity and purity in their conception of God *That does not mean they suddenly* become aware of time, while their predecessors were conscious of space only Can it be said that *Muhammad alone* was more aware of time than his contemporaries and predecessors who were polytheists?

7 R. G Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p 6.

8 B Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, p 35

9 *The Rhythm of the Real*, chapter on "History"

10 It may be noted that pantheism, monism and mysticism reached great heights in many countries, e g Greece, Italy, Germany, Spain, Holland, Russia, Central Asia, Iran, Iraq and China Only ignorance of philosophical and religious history can maintain that these *belong exclusively* to India

11 de Riencourt on Kosambi's authority debunks the Gupta Empire and thinks that only nineteenth century nationalism "promoted" its "presumed greatness and glory" He dismisses the South Indian achievement as Moonlight Civilization The Satavahanas the Pandyans and the Cholas, Vijayanagar and Shivaji, Nagarjuna and Sankara, Madura and Tanjore, Ellora and Ajanta, – all these are moonshine for him"

12 *A Study of History*, Vol VII p 449

13 See Chapter I

14 The Buddha's was the Middle Path, avoiding indulgence in sense pleasures and extreme abstinence He himself set an example by leading a graceful and comfortable life – he wore silks, lived in a scented chamber and did not avoid meat

14A *The Revolt of 1857 and the fight for independence in India in the 19th and 20th centuries are recent history K M *Munshi has with* some justice interpreted Indian history as the history of sustained Indian efforts to repel or overthrow foreign invasions and *alien rule and preserve* dharma (*vide* his Forewords in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*)

15 Even now while men like Richard Livingstone and Gilbert Murray to some extent idealize and look back to Greece Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain and others look back to Medieval Christian Culture as the archetype

16 President Ayub has moved his capital to Rawalpindi, very near to Taxila, he is reported to have talked of ancient Gandhara culture and the possibility of the birth of a successor culture now

17 The writings of Nielssen and Cumont show the role of religions in Greece and Rome, Medieval Europe was predominantly religious Only since the sixteenth century secularism gained ground in Europe

18 *Indian Foreign Policy*, Scientific Book Agency, Calcutta, 1964

Notes for Chapter Three
The Hindu Ethos

1 *History*, p 550

Emil Brunner the great theologian recognizes the uncertainty of historical knowledge about Jesus and the fragmentary and precarious nature of the gospel records (*The Scandal of Christian ty*) Our knowledge about Krsna Rama and others is much more uncertain but because of that they do no become myths

The Ved c and Itihasa Purana literatures embody genuine historical traditions Some modern critical historians (e g U N Ghoshal and S N Pradhan) recognize that by coord nating the material in these sources the history of the Ved c and post Vedic periods can be reconstructed H Ray chaudhuri s *Polit cal History of Ancient Ind a* is a successful attempt of this sort

2 For above quotations and the European attitude to history speci ally betw en 1680-1715 see P Hazard *The European M nd* London 1953 Chapter II

3 *An Essay on the Civil ations of Ind a China and Japan* p 15

3A *The Spirit of Laws* p 274

3B Cp W M D xon *The Human Situat on* p 38

Europe transformed Christianity It was an Eastern and ascetic creed a creed of withdrawal from life rather than of participation in its fierce confl cts and competition and was so understood in its early centur es

See also note 5B below

4 *The Decay and Restoration of Civili ation* p 98 9

5 *The Phenomenon of Man* Collins London 1960

Cp C A and M R Beard Philosophies which renounce the world as senseless or cruel or f lled with suffering such are the negative systems

of some Hindu cults " "In the history of India is illustrated the force of philosophic negation " (*The American Spirit*, p 3 4) Contrast with these ill informed comments of Chardin and Beard what Max Weber and A L Basham say " Indian *passivity* – is completely unfounded India has been permanently involved in a state of ferocious warfare and unbridled lust of relentless conquest as no land on earth " (*The Religion of India*, p 133) " The most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization is its humanity " "Her people enjoyed life, passionately delighting both in the things of the sense and the things of the Spirit " "India was a cheerful land whose people, each finding a niche in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindliness and gentleness in their mutual relation ships than any other nation of antiquity (*The Wonder That Was India* p 9)

5A For Chinese Buddhism see Fung Yu Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, chap 21 For Japan, Suzuki s books on Zen and Sir Charles Eliot on Japanese religion

5B B Croce *History as the Story of Liberty*, Meridian Books New York, 1955 p 163

Cp Karl Jaspers It is the Christian attitude that gradually empties the world of its substance " Agreeing with this Albert Camus says "Man s consent to the world was first shattered by Christianity (*The Rebel* London 1953 p 161) Sir Herbert Read similarly talks of Chris tian otherworldliness " (Ibid p 9) Reinhold Niebuhr an important modern Christian theologian says that human and divine history are in "perpetual contradiction to each other that Christ cannot be brought into a historical system that his teaching is beyond historical possibilities and that Christian love is not tenable in history and New Testament ethics " not relevant to human justice (*Faith and History* p 162 3 188, 192) Berdyaev too says that Christian faith and consciousness will not be realized in time and history but in eternity and the super historical (*The Meaning of History* p 200) Human destiny he says is resolved outside history (Ibid p 206) See also next Note

6 Hazard, *op cit*

The classical Western view was that the world of change of history was intelligible and significant only in relation to the transcendent world of changelessness It held liberation from the historical and the human to be the ultimate end and pure contemplation the means for it For the Christian also history is " the path to another world It has no intrinsic and natu

ral" significance Its positive significance lies in its consummation in the super-historical, "in eternal time". (Berdyaev, op cit, p 197, 206, 204 5) The modern Western view is that hitsory, this world of events, is significant and meaningful without a reference to any transcendental eternal reality Development of modern science which resulted in a more exhaustive explanation of natural phenonomena than even before the theory of evolution, and technical progress led to this change in view As Camus said, "the idea of progress is contemporary to the age of enlightenment and to the bourgeois revolution Turgot, in 1750, is the first person to give a clear definition of the new faith (*The Rebel*, p 164-5)

7 Cp with above the articles of Majumdar, Perera, Warder and Basham in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (ed C H Philips), London, 1961, Buddha Prakash, "The Hindu Philosophy of History" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XVI, No 4, New York, 1955, Articles of Kane and Pusalkar in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, XVI, p 1 18, and *Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference*, XVIII, p 58–72, V P Varma on Philosophy of History in the Gita in his *Indian Political Thought* chapter on history in my book *The Rhythm of the Real* and U N Ghoshal, *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and Other Essays*, Calcutta, 1944

In this section I however do not refer to the Mimamsa an important Hindu system, according to which the world is beginningless and everlasting i e, it always existed and will continue to be as it is now Unchanging physical and moral laws govern it Man s duty is to act throughout life according to his caste and station in life, as prescribed by the scriptures Virtue is recompensed by proportionate happiness and sin by suffering. The virtuous either go to heaven or have better lives after they are reborn He who has knowledge of the self and has no desires and performs duties for their own sake is liberated from rebirth. The Mimamsa does not deny that by human effort epochs of prosperity and happiness can be created.

8 For references see my *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta* (New York 1959 Bombay 1960), p 6

9 Of these Indian Muslim historians since partition some became Pakistanis and some may be dead now

10 Marx Engels, *Selected Works* Vol I Moscow 1950 p 323

11 Quoted by A L. Basham in Philips (ed) *Historians of India*

Pakistan and Ceylon, p 278 9

12 Brooks Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, Vintage Books, New York, 1955, p. 128

13 Marx, *loc. cit*, p 323.

14 *The Lotus and the Robot*, London 1961, p 160

15 Haimendorf's paper in *Politics and Society in India* (ed Philips), London, 1963, p 69

16 Marx, Ibid, p 319

17 Ibid, p 315

18 Ibid, p 317

19 Ibid, p 320

20 *Ibid*, p 319-20

21 Nehru in his *Discovery of India* develops these Marxian theses Much of what he says about British Rule in India and its contradictions are elaborations of Marx s ideas

22 D D Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956 p 10-12

23 See note 5A to Chapter II

24 *The Dehumanisation of Art etc* Doubleday Anchor New York 1956, p 41
See note 6 above regarding 'progress

25 Adams *passim* specially Chaps X to XII

Traditional Protestant doctrine belittled human action as having no worth and significance Luther s was, as Niebuhr said, 'a defeatist attitude towards the social *existence of mankind He placed the Gospel* in Heaven and the law upon earth (*Faith and History*)

26 R H Tawney *Relig on and the Rise of Capitalism* Penguin Books 1948, p 280

27 See his *La Pensee economique et sociale de Calvin* H Luethy s article on this in *Encounter*, January 1964

28 Bourgeois virtues like *frugality, thrift and reinvestment as* productive capital are praised in an interesting passage in *D gha Nikaya* "Admonition to Singala The wise and moral man should assiduously gather money as a bee *does honey, and pile it up like an anthill He should* spend only a fourth part of it, save another fourth against the rainy day, and with one half of it expand his trade A similar emphasis on money *making, frugality* and expansion of economic activity is found in some Japanese books See Introduction to K Samuelsson s *Religion and Economic Action* Heinemann London 1961

29 For one of the best treatments of the European attitud s to contemplation labour, work and action, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* Chicago, 1958

30 Brentaro was perhaps the first to point out that Machiavellianism eroded ethical restraints in spheres other than political also and helped to develop an individualist attitude towards economic activity while Weber showed that 17th century England developed a particular conception of social expediency which exalted the single-minded pursuit of money to the status of a virtue How far Calvinism and English Puritanism were responsible for the latter we cannot definitely say Weber and Troeltsch think these were the parents of capitalism Others differ and have showed that the capitalist spirit was prior to Calvinism As note 28 *supra* indicates the commercial classes in Buddhist India were also imbued by it as were 15th century Venice *Florence, Flanders and South Germany* 16th and 17th century Holland and England were capitalist because of, as Tawney says large economic movements the discoveries of that age and their results (p 312) We can only say with *Henry and Brooks Adams that* greed ness is not peculiar to the Protestants the Catholics were equally so before the Reformation their Church then turned rel gion into a trade and priests into hucksters *(loc cit*, p XXVIII XXIX)

Nevertheless there seems to be a closer connection between Protestantism and economy than between Catholicism and economy and similarly *Theravada Buddhism Jainism and Gandhism* seem to be more conducive to mercantile virtues like hard work self-denial, self reliance prudence

frugality, thrift and continuous productive reinvestment, than Hinduism in general Some leading merchants of his day were followers of the Buddha some of the commercial magnates of India have always been Jainas, and a number of Hindu capitalists were Gandhi s followers All this does not prove that these are bourgeoise or capitalist ideologies but that there are aspects of them which may be twisted and exclusively used to further capitalism Among some of their followers otherworldliness may come to be directed towards the world so that an unrelenting enormous economic activity becomes possible without any concern for enjoying its fruits oneself By alienating oneself from the world and deciding to use the things of the world but not to enjoy them and the sublimation of some virtues from the ascetic to the worldly plane man seems to acquire an increase in power over things Loss of the certainty of salvation (*certitudo salutis*) and a consequent constant unconscious nagging worry about the self are responsible for this concentration on mundane activity and a zeal to convince oneself about one s goodness and worthiness to salvation by hard work, economic success and a pure life Mundane success without a concern for enjoying its fruits comes to guarantee one s purity and future salvation

The Gita concept of non attachment to fruits (*anasakti*) and insistence on duty along with the Gandhian virtues of self denial and thrift are capable of becoming an inspiration for the capitalist mentality This may explain the alliance between Gandhism and Indian capitalism Similarly Theravada Buddhism with its individualism and its doctrine that each man has to help himself and cannot help others and its greater emphasis on negative monastic virtues may provide a dynamism to the capitalist spirit So we can understand why Buddhism suited mercantile classes and tradesmen in ancient India In Jainism the emphasis on ascetic virtues and penance is much greater Its doctrine of ahimsa disparages agriculture which involves killing of many organisms in the soil while ploughing aswell as politics and state service which as Somaprabha said are inevitably sinful because in them one cannot avoid harming others Jainism exalted commerce as the best profession for a layman, restless economic activity and deprivation of comforts and pleasures so that one may thereby chastise the body and purify oneself become a *tapasya* for him Thus it is no wonder Jainas flourished in commerce and industry Mahayana Buddhism and Vedanta theistic as well as absolutistic – are not so conducive to the promotion of this type of mentality They are more in tune with socialism (Gandhi s interpretation of the Gita is not correct for he reads into it ideas he got from alien sources and Jainism The teaching of the Gita does not support virtues like prudence,

frugality and thrift.)

But there seems to be no causal relation between religions and political and economic activity. The Parsees, Hindu Marwadis and Chettiars etc., have been successful capitalists in India and so have been the Jews in the West. There are also multimillionaire capitalists among the Chinese, the Japanese, the Catholics and the Greek Orthodox. The stereotype about the Jews is they are avaricious capitalists; yet neither *the Old Testament nor modern Israel are capitalist.* Marx with his Jewish *ancestry, Laski, Buber etc., are socialists.* Gandhi himself was an anarchic utopian socialist *but his doctrines and mode of life inspired capitalists!* Not to speak of Mahavira, *Hemachandra and other Jainas would be* shocked by the capitalist spirit. Theravada Buddhist countries like Cambodia, Burma, Thailand and Ceylon have shown no great aptitude for capitalism. To conclude, ideology alone cannot generate the capitalist spirit; there must be appropriate material bases for it. Also, avarice is not a monopoly of the Puritans alone; the Hindus, the Jews, the Catholics and the Jainas too have cultivated this, whatever their religions taught.

Another point for reflection is that ascetic or Puritan virtues have *an economic value and are also useful for success in life, especially in* commerce and trade in a civil society regulated by law. It pays a merchant or a tradesman to be industrious, prudent, temperate, frugal, thrifty, sincere and honest. Business integrity pays! So Benjamin Franklin tried to dechristianize these virtues and secularize them and declared they are the means for a free and easy life. Their divorce from religion and establishment on an utilitarian basis *led them to become* capitalist ethics of *unbridled competition and sordid business especially in America.* This *shows capitalism*, the cult of *limitless* earning, thrift, accumulation and re-investment – arises from a perversion of religion and ends in the worship of Mammon. No religion, Christianity or Jainism, could approve capitalism but some of their precepts when exclusively acted upon, ignoring their more essential teachings, provide a dynamic for capitalism. It is in a way *religion stood upside down. Practical achievement becomes the only criterion of this* New Morality and it is this New Morality which has infected the Occident and the Orient as well in this Modern Era. Christian and Hindu ethics, Buddhist and Islamic ethics prevail nowhere now in this world. The two religions which are now powerful are Nationalism and Mammonism.

58. For what follows see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*; Arthur Ekirch, *Idea of Progress in America.*

59 K Samuelsson for example denies this See his *Religion and Economic Action* Heinemann London 1961 The debate on this question between F H Knight and T W Merriam in their *The Econom c Order and Religion* (London 1948) is interesting

31 A few of the passages from classical texts regarding wealth may be cited The Vedas praise possession of gold cattle and o her forms of wealth very highly Revel in wealth respected teaches the Rg Veda (7 8 5) *Vitte ramasva bahumanyamanah* One ought not to ignore one s profession or livelihood says *Taittiriya Anuvaka* 11 Valli 1 *(Bhrtyai na pramaditavyam)* One must earn in some way or other abundant food (means to enjoy) says *Taittiriya Bhrugu valli Yaya kaya capi vidi aya bahvannam prapnuyat* May we live for a hundred years without poverty says *Yajurveda* Chap 36 *(Ad nah syama saradah satam)* One should continue to seek prosperity till death says Manu (Ch 4) *Amrtyoh sriyam anvic chet* What is not obtained must be desired what is protected must be multiplied and what is multiplied must be spent appropriately in charity *(Alabdham caiva l pseta* etc Manu Ch 7) All happ ness depends on one self *(sarvam atmavasam sukham Manu)* One really becomes a man only when one is prosperous says *Mahabharata (Sriman sa yavat bhavati tavat bhavati purusah Udyoga* Chap 72) Wealth is a supreme end *(dha an ah ih param dl armam* Ibid) No one should deem h mself to be suffic ent or completely fulfilled in wealth enjoyment or r ghteousness *(Na purnosmi iti manyeta dharmato kamato arthatah Santiparva* Ch 92)

I do not however suggest that in ancient and med eval India there was no poverty The masses a ways lived in great poverty even when great prosperous and stable k ngdoms flourished It was only the upper classes who enjoyed great prosperity even in the best periods Due to the scarcity of metals and a social system in which changes in occupation and techniques of work degraded ind viduals much technolog cal development and production could not take place The vast populat on combined with the limited resources of the country the low soc al status of the productive classes and the system of villages with its l mited product on and stagnant technology intensified this situat on Added to th s the upper classes appropriated most of the wealth and heavy taxat on to support large standing armies and the fabulous luxury and charity of the courts impoverished the masses But the poor in Hindu India were not poorer or more miserable than in ancient and medieval Europe and China The national *wealth was at some periods greater From the relative economic situations* of Hindus and Musli ns in India it is evident that in spite of the caste system Hindus were more industrious and more capable of pursuing profit

Hindus who have migrated to Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Africa etc., have been more hard working and avaricious than the indigenous peoples

32 *Pratigrahah pratyavarah pretya viprasya garhitah*, *Manu*, Ch 10

33 *Manusmrti*, IV 227

34 Among the daily obligatory duties is the one of feeding the lowest castes the fallen, the sinners and the diseased as well as creatures like crows and dogs that depend upon a householder But this is *bali* not *dana* In *bali*, only *anna* (food) is given, in *dana* anything may be given as a gift None but a Brahmana, or a brahmacari, or a sannyasin may beg, and of these the latter two should not receive anything as gifts except cooked food and clothes for daily necessary use In times of distress and calamity of course, anyone can ask for help and is entitled to it from all Idleness and professional begging have just no place in the Hindu social order

35 Here are some texts on these *Niyatam kuru karma tvam*, Gita, Ch. 3 *Kurvanneveha karmani jijiviset* *Yajurveda*, Ch 40 *Na ca phalati vikarma jivaloke* (*Mahabharata Anusasana*, Ch 6) *Yo hi distam upasino nirvicestah sukham sayet, avasideta sa durbuddhih*, *Vanaparva*, Ch. 22 Wealth and prosperity are *durlabha bhoktum – akrta karmabhih*, *Anusasana*, Ch 6 In several passages in *Santi Vana*, *Udvoga* and *Anusasana parvas*, idleness (*alasya*) is condemned. Dissatisfaction with one s lot and effort to better oneself are the roots of prosperity, *Anirvedah sriyomulam*, (*Udyoga*, Ch 3) *Udyama parityaktam na phalam karmanah smrtam udyoginam purusasimham upaiti laksmih* (*Pancatantra*) *Parasrayena jivanti katarah sisavah striyah*, (*Sukraniti*) He who does not work is a tailless animal (*purusah purusarthavan tadanye purusakarah pasavah pucchavarjitah*) (*Nasti utsahat param balam, sotsahasya na kincdapi durlabham*, *Ramayana*, Kiskindha 1) Kautilya considered the will to work so important that he proposed the control of pleasure houses, music parties, inns alcohol and theatres, as these may weaken it

36 *Manu* III 137 ff

37 Bad men irreligious men, idlers and scoundrels ought not to be helped, says Manu (*Pasandino vikarmah ca Ch 4*) Those who do not deserve respect should not receive any consideration. That would be *apujya pujanam* (*Mahabharata Santi Ch. 285*)

38 Cp *Mahabharata Santi*, 264 "*Lubdhaih vittaparaih brahman nastikaih pravartitam – idam deyam idam deyam iti ca ayam prasasyate* Greedy atheistic, avaidic money making men praise charity and exhort this should be given, this also should be given

39 See Tawney, loc cit p 313 Isolated passages like *artho astu nah kevalam (Bhartrhari)*, *Artham ekam prasadhayet (Pancatantra)* in *niti sastras* etc , are not to be taken literally They are *arthavadas* Passages like the one cited in note 28 *supra* are rare even in Jaina Buddhist works

39 A *Gita Bhasya* X 5 *Danam yathasakti samvibhagah* Also *Chandogya Bhasya* II 23 1

40 Bhartrhari *Aisvaryasya vibhusanam sujanata vittasya patre vyayo* Cp The story of Raghu immortalized by Kalidasa

41 *Manu* XI 9 10

42 Manu Ch 4 *Parityajet arthakamau dharmavarjitau*

43 Cp *Anusasana parva* (Ch 6) discusses daivam versus Karma and concludes *purusakarena vina daivam na siddhyati na ca phalati vikarma jivaloke na daivam* *Udyoga Parva* discusses the same and concludes effort (*udyoga*) and *purusartha* (man s activity) are greater than *daivam* (fate) Says *Pancatantra* *Daivam hi daivam iti kapurusah vadanti* Sukra teaches *Dhimanto vandyacaritah manyante paurusam mahat asaktah klibah daivam upasate* These mean The fools the impotent and the incapable only think fate is more powerful than human effort and action

44 e g , Manu,XI 11 16 *Dravyam hartavyam hinakarmanah* Of course Manu says for *Yajna* only this can be done but both he and the Gita mean by *Yajna* all action done for the sake of the welfare of the world and the pleasing of gods

45 *Viprah krsivrttim samacaret* *Prathamam krsi* says *Parasara*, Ch 3 Among professions from Vedic times agriculture was considered to be the best by the Hindus then commerce and lastly government service (*Krsimit krnusva*, taught the Veda) But Jainism especially and to some extent Buddhism gave priority to trade and commerce not to agriculture Commerce however was not disparaged by the Hindus. *Sarvam phaneh samavindanta* – says *Atharvaveda* (20 3 25) The *Pancatantra* says *Na*

manye vanijyat kimapi paramam vartanam iha When foreigners established their regimes in India, the persons who learnt Persian and English and became state servants became the ruling class and gained prestige

45 A *Manu*, IV 4 6 *Na svavrrttya kadacana, seva svavrttih akhyata*

46 Marx, loc cit, p 314 He recognizes another cause also for this, viz. that the territorial extent is too vast to be dealt with by private enterprise

47 Bhisma clearly says that it is the government which makes an 'age', or creates Yugas When a state is well governed, it enjoys a Krta yuga (*Rajadharma* sections, *Mahabharata*)

48 To this question asked with reference to monarchy by Yudhistira, the reply given by Bhisma was A man rules over others because he is endowed with virtue and works for the peoples' welfare The ideal of a king ought to be to please his people Metaphorically a king is the representative of the gods, because he protects law and order in the realm just as gods do in the universe A king must be endowed with what the Gita calls the *Daivi sampat* (divine qualities) It is for the people that one becomes a king It is the *rastra* (state) which consecrates a king the *rastra* is the *praja* (people) (*Ibid*)

It was Asoka s IV Pillar Edict which perhaps for the first time in the world enjoined impartiality in judicial procedures and punishments, and maintained the equality of all before law In spite of the privileges which Manu proposed to give to the higher classes he expected them to have higher standards and laid down for them higher penalties than for lower classes for crimes like thefts While some *smrtis* prohibited execution of Brahmanas for any crime, Kautilya, Katyayana and others allowed this in the case of grave crimes Altogether, fair and humane relations among individuals, and between the individual and the state did not prevail in any other ancient civilization to a greater extent than in Hindu India (Slavery was a recognized institution in ancient India but it was very mild compared to the system elsewhere Consequently the Greco-Roman visitors failed to notice it Asokan Edicts and some Smrti writers like Apastamba enjoin kind and humane treatment of slaves Certain fundamental rights were granted to them by the Arthasastras though the dharmasastras were harsher An Aryan could not be kept in permanent slavery It tended to vanish gradually, but Muslim rule again revived and magnified it It was ultimately abolished in 1843 without provoking any opposition or excitement)

49 Marx, loc cit, p 225

50 Ibid, p 317

51 I am taking 'socialism' here in a broad sense as a system which ensures for people social, economic and political equality, freedom and welfare, and for this end initiates and controls economic activity and the means of production If necessary for peoples' welfare, in it the state owns the means of production especially the more vital and major ones In socialism state ownership is not the end but a means to welfare and social and economic justice Periodic free general elections planning and evolutionary changes through parliamentary means and guarantee of personal freedom and human dignity are its characteristics In it people exist for themselves each one is an end in himself, they do not live for the state, or the Party, or for proving a hypothesis regarding history, or for working to create a future utopia Duly legislated laws govern life and property

A number of Hindu thinkers (e g Manu Mitramisra Bhattasvamin) considered that all the land and water in a state were owned by the sovereign, or by the people in common (Sabara *Mimamsa Bhasya* VI 7 3) Government had the right to evict defaulting or inefficient peasants The property of those who died without heirs reverted to the sovereign, a fee was collected before a dead man's property was transferred to his heirs treasure troves discovered anywhere belonged to the ruler when necessary government had the right to confiscate hoarded wealth to feed the hungry The *smrtis* and *arthasastras* refer to all this As against this some Hindu thinkers (e g Nilakantha) maintained that land was the private property of those who owned it

52 Wm Th de Bary and others *Sources of Indian Tradition*, New York, 1958, p 666-8

53 Ibid p 671

54 Ibid, p 673

55 Ibid p 679

56 Ibid, p 690 3

57 *The Annals*, May 1956 p 86

Notes for Chapter Six Experience, Reason and 'Transcendental Materialism' in Indian Philosophy

1 Dean Faculty of Letters Lille University

2 For his paper see p 32 41 *Diogenes* No 24 Chicago 1958

3 Ibid p 41

3A *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (New York 1953) p 205 82.

4 *Essentials of Hinduism* (Advaita Ashram, Almora 1947)

5 *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* p 76 84

As in Greek or modern Western philosophy the Upanisads nowhere cast doubt on the ability of senses to apprehend reality Says the *Brhadaranyaka* Perception is the foundation of reality and truth, he who has no eyes has nothing Whatever is seen is true and is indubitable (IV 1 4 V 14 4)

6 *Indian Philosophy* Vol I p 258–9

7 Ibid Vol II p 438 440

8 Op cit p 712

8A *The Hindu View of Life* (Unwin Books London 1963) p 45

9 *The Discovery of India* Pp 16 17

9A Louis Renou *Religions of Ancient India* (London 1953) p 99

10 *Diogenes* No 24 p 33

11 Ibid p 36

12 Ibid p 37

13 Besides Radhakrishnan Ganganatha Jha Kokileswara Sastri and others have made this very clear

14 *Sutra Bhasya* III 2 9

15 Ibid II 1 34 *Gita Bhasya* XVIII 41

16 *Sutra Bhasya* II 1 13 14

17 Ib d II 2 28 30

18 Ib d III, 2 3–4

19 In the next Section while discussing Regamey I will use reason in the sense of *buddh*

20 This should not mean I am an uncritical follower of Sankara My objections to his theory are (i) the purport of Hindu scr ptures is not *advaita* in his sense (ii) even unitive mystic experience does not and cannot reveal absolute and utter identity (iii) No except onal experience of the sort claimed by some Advaitins can set at naught normal lived reality Perception cannot be sublated by scripture or mystic experience though it can be reinterpreted and made meaningful by them as well as by reason For my criticism of Advaita *Revelation and Reason in Ad a ta Vedanta* (New York 1959 Bombay 1960) Book II Part II

21 For a full treatment of this theme and documentation see my above book especially p 112 120

21A I am aware of the passages like *na medhaya na bahuna srtena pandityam nirvidya balyena tisthaset* (Vide infra and note 44) I am here talking of the total purport of the Upanisads not of the literal meaning of some isolated passages What texts like these two mean is mere intellect una ded by srti and unperceptive learn ng unsupported by a purif ed m nd (*citta suddhi*) and appropriate meditation cannot grasp the Supreme Reality

I also remember that the Gita says that the common folk - *striyo vaisyah tatha sudrah* - can attain Him through *bhakti* But then the result is not Lacombe's ineffable experience of an Absolute devoid of all attributes and features

22 Ibid , p 40–1

23 Ibid , p 1 36

23A A B Keith *Buddhist Philosophy, p 33 Uttaradhyayana, SBE XIV, p 154*

23B D T Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism* (Doubleday Anchor, New York, 1956), p 60

24 *Evolution of Philosophy in India*

25 *Metaphysics, Man and Freedom*, Bombay, 1962

26 *Revelation & Reason in Advaita Vedanta p 6*
For *Bhasya* references Ibid p *336*

27 See the very first five verses

28 XI 2 29 (Calcutta edition)

29 *Dhammapada Buddhavaggo* 4

30 Kenneth Morgan in Milton Singer *Introducing India in Liberal Education*, (Chicago 1957) p 112 Faced with the question of choosing the protection and promotion of human life and happiness as against that of animals and plants any Indian philosopher will choose the former It may be recalled that Gandhi was prepared to kill the monkeys that became a menance to orchards Of course a Bodhisattva or a Jina may sacrifice his *own* life to save that of another animal, reptile bird or man But that is another story and such a person never thinks his life is inferior to that of the saved creature but that he thereby serves a higher value than by living A heroic man who saves a child or a dog from drowning does not think that the child or the dog are of equal value to or greater than himself Cf with Morgan Aurobindo 'The dignity given to human existence by the Vedantic thought and by the thought of the classical ages of Indian culture

exceeded anything conceived by the western idea of humanity [*The Foundations of Indian Culture* (New York 1953) p 111 2]

Long ago Radhakrishnan showed how silly the following questions were If everything is God are not the pickpocket and the pimp God and their activities sacred? Is Piccadilly Circus God? See his *The Hindu View of Life* p 50-1

31 He is Professor of Slavic and Oriental Languages Lausanne University and Professor of General Linguistics Fribourg University Switzerland

32 *Philosophy and Culture East and West* Ed C A Moore (Honolulu 1962) p 316-341

33 Ibid p 320

34 Op cit p 321

35 Ibid p 3?0

36 Ibid p 3?2

37 Ibid p 328

38 *Yasya deve para bhaktih yatha deve tatha gurau tasya ete kathitha hi arthah prakasante* says the *Svetasvetara* *Sraddhavan labhate yogam Idam na abhaktaya Sraddha an—srnuyat yo narah sah api muktah* thus the *Gita*

39 Ibid his foot note No ?3

40 Gita *Mattah paratarami va anyat Brahmano hi pratistha aham*

41 The world certainly is not *in* God as a suit is in a suitcase The Transcendent Being is the origin and goal the foundation and the prop the alpha and the omega of the world That is the sense suggested by such sentences Statements like Christ is revealed in us and we live and move in Christ are not at all rare in Christian books and mystical writings God language everywhere whether in the Gita St John or St Paul has its own logic background and context and when inappropriately analysed and understood it is reduced to nonsense

42 Ibid p 322 3

42A I generally use reason in this section in the sense of *buddhi* and *manas* not in the sense of *tarka* or a *pramana* viz. *anumana* I hope Regamey too means this But if reason means *anumana* as it cannot demonstrate anything about Brahman in Vedanta the question of its being overridden by intuition does not arise In Nyaya it demonstrates God s existence and intuition *(Yogi pratyaksa)* confirms it If reason is *tarka* some types of it confirm scripture says Vedanta

43 *Katha* I 3 10 11

44 *Katha* 1.2.9 and Sankara on it

45 Ibid 1 3 5 9

45A Ibid 1 11 *Manasa vedam aptavyam*

46 Ibid 1 3 12

47 *Katha* 2.3 12

48 Commentary on above *Buddhirhi nah pramanam sadasatorya thatmya vagame*

48A *Katha* I 2 24 *Prajnanena nam apnuvat*

49 *Kena* II 4 *Prati bodha v d tam matam* (*Bodha—Bauddhah pratya yah* Sankara)

50 Ibid II 5 (*Dh rah=Dh mantah* Sankara)

51 *Mundaka* II 2.7 *Tasm n manah samadhanam*

52 Ibid II 27 *Atma manovrtti bh reva v bhavyata*

53 Op cit & Sankara s *bhasya*

54 Ibid. III 1 9

55 III 1 7

56 *Bhasya* on above *Taittiriya bhasya* I 6 1 *Manovijnanam mano antahkaranam*

57 *Taittiriya* I 4 1

58 Ibid, II 4 1

59 Commentary on Text 5 *Svapnajagranmanah spandanani prajna nani*

60 Op cit
Sankara in *Sutra Bhasya* II 3 32 identifies *manas buddhi vijnana* and *citta*

61 III 42 43 As there is no gap between *buddhi* and *manas* (infra) there is no leap from the former to the vision of God

62 VI 21

63 X 10 XIII 57, II 49

64 II 39

65 II 44 53

66 XVIII 30–32

67 XVIII 50–51

68 II 54 67 V 19 *Stitaprajna=Sthitadhih*

69 III 39–40

70 II 52 56

71 II 50–52

71A It is significant that whenever the Upanishads speak of the Self as ungraspable (*agrahyam*) Sankara explains it as ungraspable by the senses of action (*karmendriyas*) (e g *Mundaka* I 1 6 *Mandukya* I 7) Were the self totally unknowable one would not have self-consciousness at

all, but every one knows that he exists, only about the nature of the self there is no unanimity Sankara made this clear in *Sutra Bhasya*, I 1 1

71 B Dr Bhagavan Das rightly says the Gita and the Upanisads do not mention any faculty higher than *buddhi* It must be refined and perfected to see Atman *Prajna* and *bodhi* are, he says, synonyms for perfected and purified *buddhi* inturned by Vairagya (*Krsna*, Madras, 1929, p 274)

72 Sankara, *Brhadaranya Bhasya*, II, 4.5, IV 5 6

73 Ibid, III 1 1

74 It is in Sankara s writings that "experience" (*anubhava, anubhuti*) and "bringing to immediacy" or "bringing in conjunction with the eye (*aksa*) – *saksatkara* – occur frequently

74 A The *Mandukya* not only says *Atma Catuspat*, but also *Nantah Prajnam* etc

75 I 4 17, 7 The text uses the pronoun 'he'

76 T R V Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p 142
Hui neng, the great Chinese Zen master also said, "Truth is understood by the mind" *Dhyana* and *Prajna* are one, like a lamp and its light, the use of *dhyana* is *prajna*

77 Ibid, pp 219–20, 221, 224

77A In Zen Buddhism there are a number of schools Of these, only the Southern School of Hui neng maintains that there is a leap from *dhyana* to *prajna* The school of Shen hsin, for example says there is a continuity between the two But inasmuch as Hui neng himself says that "truth is understood by the mind and that *dhyana* and *prajna* are one like a lamp and its light and that the use of *dhyana* is *prajna*, one wonders whether there is an abrupt leap involved in *satori* (Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism* Double day Anchor, 1956, p 169, 178–9) A scientist or a mathematician grappling with a problem intensely may not solve it when consciously engaged upon it, but hit upon it most unexpectedly and suddenly in a dramatic flash when not at all thinking of it Is this "insight" an abrupt leap qualitatively distinct and cut off from all his thinking? Had Archimedes' *Eureka* and the Buddha's *bodhi* nothing at all to do with their ways of life background.

thinking and meditations? Not knowing Chinese, I cannot judge how far Hui neng faithfully represents the original Buddhist impulse and to what extent Suzuki correctly interprets him Do not some think that Suzuki has overstressed the nonrational elements in some Zen schools and has tended to identify them with all Zen? Anyway, even if Suzuki is solely relied upon, Hui neng s is just one school of Zen, though important, and Zen is just one school of Mahayana Buddhism And there always has been the Theravada denying Mahayana to be really Buddhism! All this shows the flimsiness of the foundation – Suzuki's 'abrupt leap' – on which Regamey generalized that in all Eastern Philosophy there is a leap from reason to intuition

78 In the West there is no one doctrine of the Spirit In Plato, the soul has three parts the rational, the irascible and the concupiscent (Jowett), or, as otherwise translated, the reasonable the courageous and desires (Zeller) In the *Symposium* Spirit is Love, a mean between the divine and the mortal In Aristotle, there is an Active Reason which is not part of the soul, but comes from without. In Eckhart and Ruysbroeck, Spirit is mind at a high level of existence, or reason self-conscious of itself being all reality Hebrew thought distinguished between *basar* (flesh), *nephesh* (ego) and *ruah* (spirit) The latter are similar to *buddhi* and *atman* St Paul has the trichotomy of body, soul and spirit, and the duality of a natural body and a spiritual body In some Muslim thinkers there are *nafs*, the ego and *ruh*, the immortal spirit, somewhat like the *buddhi* and *Atman* *Nafs* is to be subdued and purified by asceticism and prayer

79 She was Professor in the University of Halle-Wittenberg, and the School of Oriental Studies London

80 Allen and Unwin London, 1937

81 Ibid, p 49

82 See Chap I & p 67

83 Ibid., p 29

84 Ibid, p 33

85 Ibid., p 129

85A Ibid, p 26

86 Ibid p 32

87 Ibid p 33

88 Ibid p 34

She forgets RgVeda also says God is Keeper of Rta (*Rtasya gopta*)

89 Ibid p 35

89A RgVeda III 54 9

89B It must also be remembered that within each of these there are a hundred differences Isiah s conceptions are not identical with those of his predecessors and successors Augustine John Scotus Erigena Bonaventura Thomas Aquinas Duns Scotus William Occam and St Teresa do not share the same philosophy and among the Protestants there are so many sects

90 Ibid p 36

91 Ibid p 38 9

92 Ibid p 39–40

93 Ibid p 43

94 It is noteworthy that Heimann does not give any references to prove her broad generalizations and several astonishing statements about Indian philosophy She just goes on speculating on the basis of the etymologies of some words ignoring the history of the philosophical ideas and systems in India Much of what she says applies to a hypothetical Hinduism and not to either historical Hinduism or living Hinduism

95 P T Raju s recent *Idealistic Thought of India* is well known Das Gupta s masterpiece *Indian Idealism* published in 1933 seems to have been ignored by Heimann

96 *Vide* Barua *Pre Buddhistic Philosophy*

96A R. G Bhandarkar *Collected Works* Vol I p 69–72.

97 Ibid, p 56

98 Ibid p 57

99 Ibid p 58

100 Ibid p 61

100A *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (New York, 1953) p 63
By Spirit Aurobindo seems to mean Brahman See Ibid p 142 3

101 Ibid p 110

102 *The Renaissance in India* (Calcutta, 1937) p 58

103 Ibid p 59

104 Ibid p 81

105 Op cit

106 *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p 199-200

107 *Essays on the Gita* Vol I p 36

108 Ibid, p 44

109 *Indian Philosophy*, Vol I p 24, 34

110 Ibid, p 41

111 Ibid, p 42

112 Ibid Vol II p 766

113 Ibid, p 776

Notes for Chapter Seven
Religion and Ethical Practices: The Hindu View

1 *Manusmrti*, VI 92, *Bhagavata*, XI 17 21

2 *Manusmrti* VIII 15, *Taittiriya*, I 11

3 *Vaisesika Sutra* I 1 2.

4 *RgVeda*, II 23 19

5 *Mahabharata* XII 190 13

6 *Brhadaranyaka* II 5 11, The Self is *sukram* (pure, holy)–*Katha* II.5 8 11

7 *Chandogya* VIII 4 1

8 See *Katha* 1 2.23

9 *Chandogya* IV 14 3

10 *Brhadaranyaka* IV 4 5

11 For detailed discussions of these positions see my 'Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta'

12 *Gautama Dharma Sutra* I 1 2.

13 *Manusmrti* II 6

14 Cf *Mimamsa Sutra* 1 1.2.

15 For this also see note 11

16 According to all Hindu systems of thought, except that of the Bhagavatas, souls are eternal and uncreated

17 Gita, XVIII 47

18 For details see p 13-15 in this book

19 I 195 29, XII 260 6 88

20 There have been robber and prostitute castes based on this principle, and they are just dying

21 See note 18

22 On Progress–*Atharva* V 30 7, See also *Mahabharata Sabha* 55 11, *Udyoga*, 132 33, *Santi*, 23 9 On Hard Work–*RgVeda*, 4 33 11, *Atharva* VII 52 8, *Yajur*, 40 2 On Health–*Atharva* 3 24 5 *Rg*, 1 9 7, 1 114 8 On wakefulness and need for ceaseless effort *Atharva* 7 52 8 *Yaju*, 34 1, *RgVeda* 8 2 18, 4 33 11 *Yajur*, 30 19

23 *Rg*, 10 137 1

24 *Rg* 10 101 1 *Rg*, 10 114 1, *Yajur*, 36 18, *Rg* 5 66 6

25 *Manusmrti* IV 176

26 *Atharva* 5 24 13, 6 11 2 etc

27 *Taittiriya* I 11 *Apastamba*, I 20 6

28 *Mahanarayana* 8, 9 *Maitri* 3 5

29 *Gita*, 13 7 11

30 *Gita* 12 13

31 For a detailed discussion see Tilak, *Gita Rahasya*, Vol I, Chap II

32 *Mahabharata*, *Santiparva* 259 17–18

33 *Manu* I 85

34 *Mahabharata Anu* 113 8

35 *Gita* II 49

36 *Mahabharata Santi* 109 12

37 Ibid 109 10

38 "*Mahajano yena gatah sa panthah*" (*Mahabharata*)

39 *Manusmrti* II 4 Any Hindu book gives the explanation

40 *Jabala* 4 *Kaivalya* 1 2

41 IV 4 22

42 Op Cit Also Ibid III 5 1 *Mundaka* 1 2 11

42A Some Advaita Vedantins like Mandana do not accept this position and insist action is indispensable even after obtainment of knowledge

43 *Sutra bhasya* III 3 32 *Gita bhasya* II 11 III 20

44 *Gita bhasya* II 11 III 17 19 *Sutra bhasya* II 3 48

45 *Sankhya Pravacana bhasya* III 36

46 *Sutra bhasya* 1 2 21 II 2 21 II 1 14

47 Ibid I 1 1 III 3 1 III 4 1 9 III 4 26–7

47A *Samyakdarsanopaya Karmanam sthanam* *Gita bhasya* IV 42

48 VI 86–96 XII 86–90 on Vaidic Karma Yoga See *Yajnavalkya Smrti* III 204 5

49 *Baudhayana* II 6 11 33 34 *Apastamba* II 9 24 8

50 *Taittiriya Samhita* VI 3 10 5

51 Ibid I 11

52 *RgVeda* X 117 6 *Gita* III 13

53 *Baudhayana* II 6 11 33 34

54 *Taittiriya* 1 9

55 *Gita* III 9

56 Ibid XVIII 5-6

57 *Isopanisad* and *Gita passim* *Bhagavata* I 5 12 I 5 34

58 *Manusmrti* VII 144 *Gita* III 20 *Vedanta Sutra* III 3 32 III 4 15

59 *Santiparva* 348 62 3 For descriptions of such action see *Bhagavata* IV 22 51 2 VII 10 23 XI 4 6

Notes for Chapter Eight Ethics and Politics in Hindu Culture

1 *RgVeda* 4 23 8

2 *Ibid* 4 23 9

3 *Ibid* 1 67 3–4 9 73 9 1 65 3–4

4 *RgVeda* 10 129 2

5 *Vasista Samhita* 19 7 9

6 *Santiparva* 8

7 10 8 12 and 1 1 14

8 *RgVeda* 1 80–81

9 5 1 5 14

10 1 10 18 1

11 *Santiparva* 287

12 *Santiparva* LXV

13 *Baudhayana* 1 10 11 8

14 *Gautama* 12 48

15 *Santiparva* 57 44–47

16 *Ibid*, 78 35-44

17 *Ibid*, 90 3 5

18 *Anusasana Parva*, 61 32 33

19 7 111-112

20 *Satapatha*, 5 4 7

Though Hindu monarchy was generally hereditary, the practice of electing kings never ceased to exist in Hindu India E. g, In 606 A D Harsha was elected king of Thanesar by a Council of nobles in the 8th century Gopala was elected King of Bengal and Nandivarman of Kanchi by their peoples, and in the 9th century Yasaskara was elected King of Kashmir by an assembly of Brahmanas There were similar cases in other parts of the country at different periods According to Hindu tradition a sovereign must be elected directly or indirectly by the people or be acceptable to them

21 5 2 1 25

22 5 3 3 9

23 *Sukra Niti*, 2. 99-100

24 *Santiparva*, LVIII 115-116

25 12 140 1 40

26 *Santiparva*, 130 142

27 3 158, 9 1

28 Satchidananda Murty and A C Bouquet, *Studies in The Problems of Peace*, pp 186 204 Asia Publishing House Bombay, 1960

See also Satchidananda Murty, *Indian Foreign Policy*, Scientific Book Agency Calcutta 1 1964, pp 142 5, for a discussion of the realistic component of Gandhian thought

29 ' Studies in the Problems of Peace , pp 320-338

For further discussion regarding ethics and politics, my *Indian Foreign Policy* p 115 9, 146-9

Index of Names

(Only names of some prominent persons are listed.)

Index of Subjects

(Only some important subjects are listed)

Index for Notes

(Onl\ the subjects dealt with in the Notes and th^ names of some persons who are quoted or mentioned in them are listed in this The Roman and Arabic numerals in the brackets ind cate the Chapters and the Notes respectively The figures outside the brackets refer to the pages Authors sources and passages have not been indexed)